

A REVIEW OF
THE FORGING OF CODEX SINAITICUS
BY DR W. R. COOPER

AGAINST DETAILED BACKGROUND
OF THE DISCOVERY OF THE CODEX

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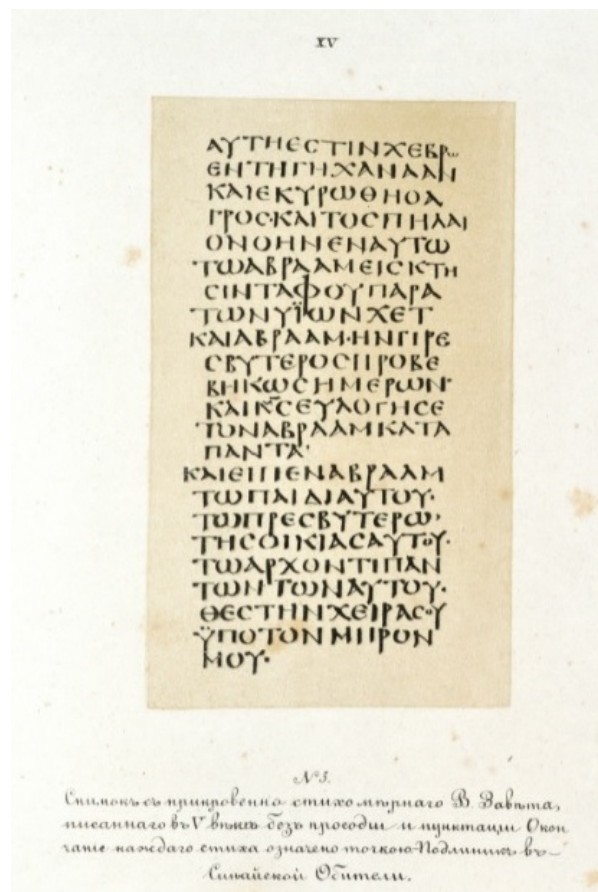


Figure 1 Porphyrius Uspensky's plate of part of the leaf containing Genesis 24, and the appearance of 'white parchment' seen by him in 1845, published 1857.

PREFACE

The present work was commissioned by the Protestant Truth Society (of which the present reviewer is a trustee) following requests for a book review of Bill Cooper's book *The Forging of Codex Sinaiticus*, whose thesis some supporters had found compelling. A similar request had been made by a ministerial colleague from within the reviewer's denomination over a year earlier, and detailed preliminary research had already been undertaken at the time of the PTS commission.

It would be a great mistake if readers of this review article were wrongly to infer that because the review demonstrates that Dr Cooper's thesis is in error in claiming a Vatican-inspired provenance of Codex Sinaiticus in the mid-nineteenth century then the reviewer must be in favour of modern textual criticism and the resulting Greek New Testaments, and translations therefrom, or be soft on Romanism. Quite the contrary, the present reviewer believes in the value and importance of the *Textus Receptus* and the Authorized King James Version of the Bible as the best English translation, but also that the dissemination of error, from wherever it appears, does no service to the truth. It is also the case that the reviewer is a sincere Protestant, and, as is clear from the review, a particularly repugnant aspect of the thesis is its reliance upon the false testimony of a notorious fraudster and perjurer who gloried in his role of viciously persecuting the Protestant Reformed cause, and shrank not from attempting to destroy the lives and reputations of the saints.

The suggestion that Codex Sinaiticus is a nineteenth century forgery by Jesuits, and the attempts to prove such by means of conspiracy theories, are huge distractions from consideration of its real provenance, which reveals a heavy influence from heterodox elements in the early church, certainly in the fourth century, and possibly in the fifth and sixth centuries as well.

A great deal of research unearthed during this undertaking, but not directly relevant to Dr Cooper's book and so not included here, is expected to appear in a subsequent monograph *Codex Sinaiticus and the Three Constantines*.

INTRODUCTION

In 1982, textual scholar J.K. Elliott (currently Emeritus Professor of New Testament textual criticism, University of Leeds) confidently announced that ‘No one nowadays doubts the antiquity and importance of the Codex Sinaiticus...[T]he authenticity and age of Codex Sinaiticus (and the portion of it known as Friderico-Augustanus) are beyond dispute’.¹ And yet, in early 2017 when the present reviewer via a colleague made enquiry to the relevant department of the British Library (which houses a substantial part of Codex Sinaiticus) in light of certain matters presented in Bill Cooper’s book *The Forging of Codex Sinaiticus*,² they responded that they were all ‘aware of the ongoing doubts and concerns about the dating of this extraordinary manuscript.’³

Scholars have been unable easily to compare the state of the various parts of the Codex Sinaiticus manuscript held in Leipzig, London, St Petersburg, and Sinai. A monochrome photographic facsimile of the whole (which knew nothing of the 1975 New Finds in Sinai) was complete around a century ago (New Testament 1911, Old Testament 1922). This monochrome facsimile had to serve for nearly 100 years until a colour version was produced by an international consortium, the Codex Sinaiticus Project, in which all the parts are represented. However there were significant inconsistencies in the digitizations at the various sites, and direct visual colour comparisons between sites from the website are invalid. Some differences in physical condition between the leaves recovered in 1844, 1859, and 1975, and the fragments recovered at various times, can nevertheless be seen, and this elicits questions to which convincing answers—especially of any conservation treatments applied to the leaves—would be welcome.

Dr Cooper has brought to the attention of the non-scholarly readership numerous questions concerning the authenticity of Codex Sinaiticus, which, together with Codex Vaticanus, so dazzled nineteenth century revisionists and led directly to the production of modern translations significantly at variance with the Received, the Byzantine, or the majority Greek texts of the New Testament. Modern Bible translations such as the NIV long ago were stating that the ‘The most ancient and reliable manuscripts’ have or do not have some variant reading, which is rather begging the question, especially on reliability. As Burgon pointed out in the nineteenth century, since there are a greater number of consecutive pairs of verses

¹ J.K. Elliott. *Codex Sinaiticus and the Simonides Affair*, Patriarchal Institute for Patristic Studies, (Thessaloniki, 1982), pp. 8, 18. Elliott presumably had not anticipated the rise of the internet, which spreads misinformation and conspiracy theories like wildfire.

² W. R. Cooper, *The Forging of Codex Sinaiticus: An illustrated consideration of the anomalies and the many indicators of 19th-century forgery contained in the manuscript*, Creation Science Movement (2016).

³ Private correspondence.

where Vaticanus and Sinaiticus disagree with one another than where they agree; and that on many classic passages where any one of the five supposedly most ancient uncial manuscripts deviates from the Received text these five uncials never once agree amongst themselves, any claim for their reliability is absurd. As for their age, although Vaticanus was catalogued in the fifteenth century and consulted even at the time of the Reformation, and so must be well over five hundred years old, Sinaiticus has only been subject to detailed examination since the mid-nineteenth century. Any claim regarding age (and scholars claim production in the fourth century) has, to date, been based mainly on the verdict of palaeography, which as we shall see is unsafe and insufficient. This has led some, such as Dr Cooper, to suspect that it is a nineteenth century forgery.⁴

Determining genuineness by materials analysis

When the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered in 1946 they were submitted for radiocarbon dating in 1950 to establish their antiquity. Researchers also analysed their ink composition using a cyclotron particle accelerator, performed DNA testing on the parchment (animal hide), particle-induced X-ray emissions testing, and broadband fluorescence infrared photography.

Unlike the case of other manuscripts where palaeography alone failed to distinguish between the genuine and the fake, yet chemical and physical analysis finally confirmed modern forgery, no museum has shown any inclination to perform similar analyses on Codex Sinaiticus – or Codex Vaticanus, Codex Alexandrinus, and papyri such as *p46* for that matter.

The aforementioned private correspondence with the British Library put the matter clearly with regard to radiocarbon dating: it has no plans to perform C¹⁴ dating of Codex Sinaiticus, nor has it done any in the past. Additionally, the Codex Sinaiticus Project, which brings together the work of the four museums that house parts of the codex, confirms that no chemical analysis has been performed on the inks:

The Codex Sinaiticus inks have never been chemically characterized, and the type and proportions of ingredients mixed together have never been determined.

Therefore, the composition of the writing media can only be roughly guessed by observing their visible characteristics and their degradation patterns.⁵

This is remarkable considering the case of Gregory-Aland Codex 2427 formerly known as ‘Archaic Mark’ whose text is extremely similar to Codex Vaticanus, a matter that is touched upon briefly and relevantly by Dr Cooper in respect of

⁴ A more recent book that has appeared, covering similar ground, but in a longer treatment is David W Daniels, *Is the “World’s Oldest Bible” a fake?*, (2018). Also J A Moorman *Was Codex Sinaiticus Written in 1840!* [sic] (2018). Most of the critical comments directed to Cooper’s book apply also to Daniels’.

⁵ http://www.codexsinaiticus.org/en/project/conservation_ink.aspx

chemical analysis (although he makes a grave error in relation to Vaticanus as is noted below). Codex 2427 was highly esteemed by T.C. Skeat, palaeographer at the British Museum, and by Kurt Aland, whose work on the Greek New Testament text forms the basis for most modern translations. However, its genuineness was completely undermined in 2006 when its text was demonstrated slavishly to follow Buttmann's 1860 *typographical* facsimile of Vaticanus, including its mistakes, and it was confirmed in 2009 by chemical analysis that it is a forgery of later than 1874 since one of the inks used in its production was not marketed until that year. A similar example (relevant to this review since Dr Cooper believes that Codex Sinaiticus was written in 1840 by Simonides) is recounted in the newspaper obituary of Constantine Simonides:

Simonides, the notorious Greek manuscript forger...had a most remarkable career, and as a forger of Egyptian and Syrian antiquities he stands without an equal. Among his exploits was the presentation to a committee of scholars of a manuscript of Homer...anterior to the Christian era. Eleven of the 12 members of the committee were convinced of the authenticity of the document, but the twelfth discovered that it was a faithful copy of the text of Homer as published by the German critic Wolff, and that the manuscript reproduced the whole of the printer's errors in this edition...Several of the greatest scholars of Europe were, indeed, deceived by the forgeries of this astute Greek.⁶

These embarrassing debacles underscore that through over-reliance on palaeography it really is possible to fool almost all of the people all of the time.

⁶ *The Times*, October 18, 1890.

DR COOPER'S THESIS

We may state Dr Cooper's thesis succinctly as follows: in order to damage the work of Bible societies and Protestantism in general, the Vatican, especially the Jesuits, in the early nineteenth century hit upon the idea of promoting to Protestants a mediaeval forgery that appeared to be an ancient copy of the Scriptures in their library (Codex Vaticanus). This was full of errors and thus little regarded, but differed so much from the *Textus Receptus* upon which Protestant Bibles were based that, if accepted by Protestants as authoritative, it would throw confidence in the Scriptures (outside Rome's direct control) into confusion. To this enterprise the famous German Lutheran scholar and specialist in ancient uncial manuscripts, Constantine Tischendorf, was enlisted, as was also the brilliant Greek calligrapher, and dealer in manuscripts, Constantine Simonides. Tischendorf was invited for an audience with the Pope and became a tool of the Jesuits, eventually finding an uncial codex at St Catherine's monastery in Sinai, which he would identify as a fourth century manuscript with similarities to Codex Vaticanus. Yet in reality Tischendorf knew that Codex Sinaiticus had recently been produced by Simonides in the old style of uncial writing; it had been commissioned by the Russian monastery at Mount Athos (now in Greece), so far as Simonides was aware, to be a present for the Tsar of Russia. Unexpectedly and unintended by the Vatican, Tischendorf made his first trip to Sinai fifteen years too early, thereby discovering and carrying away some leaves of Simonides' manuscript that had been diverted there before the work of doctoring the codex had really got underway. Nevertheless, the work of forgery on the remainder continued. The Jesuits distressed the codex to give it an appearance of age, and substituted pages to eliminate the end of Mark's Gospel in both Codex Sinaiticus in Sinai and Codex Vaticanus at Rome. Somehow the Russians became aware that an ancient codex was ready for collection, and engaged Tischendorf to collect it from Sinai and carry it to St Petersburg. Tischendorf, wanting to conceal its true origins, removed leaves that had been improperly distressed and chopped pieces out that bore obvious witness to Simonides. Thus the Codex ended up in the Tsar's hands, not as a pristine nineteenth century production intended as a present from a monastery on Mount Athos, but as a purported fourth century text from the monastery at Mount Sinai.

This is an elaborate conspiracy, to be sure, but since it is certain that the Church of Rome has been engaged in innumerable plots and conspiracies in the past, a suspicion of conspiracy cannot be dismissed out of hand without examination. But since Dr Cooper's thesis that there was a 'forging' of Codex Sinaiticus is not a *revealed* truth, then it can only rightly be established on grounds that are evidence based. For such a thesis to be credible there needs to be a collection of facts that provide evidence for a conclusion that follows from application of a sound methodology. The facts must inform the thesis: a pre-existing opinion that drives a

search for supporting 'facts' is a weak approach, and especially prone to bias. Ideally a thesis should be proposed by someone knowledgeable in the subject, but at the very least the facts and inferences drawn should be checked with experts in the relevant fields. Steps should be taken to minimize confirmation bias. Finally, the thesis should make clear what evidence would falsify it, and address proposed falsifying evidence.

Especially when a thesis concerns *a conspiracy* (as in this case) and departs from these principles it drifts inexorably into the ambit of 'conspiracy theory', generating excuses for not meeting minimum standards of evidence. Such excuses claim, for example, that one cannot consult recognized experts to check facts and inferences because those who are recognized experts are also part of the conspiracy; and those who recognize them as experts do so because they are themselves involved in the conspiracy: all have a motive to hide the truth, giving out disinformation and withholding 'facts'. But as we shall see, it is the conspiracy theorist himself who hides the truth, withholds information and purveys disinformation. Moreover, any critical analysis of the claims of his thesis is viewed as part of the conspiracy if the analysis is unfavourable. In short, this kind of methodology is fatally flawed because nearly everything can be shaped into being part of the conspiracy, reinforcing that particular 'conspiracy theory', and making falsification impossible (in the eyes of the conspiracy theorist).

To brand any thesis concerning conspiracy a 'conspiracy theory' at the outset is to rob it of credibility before giving it a fair hearing. Nevertheless, we should weigh carefully that accepting a *false* conspiracy as true comes at a great cost, not merely intellectually, but in credibility, in the cause of truth, and in the health and prosperity of the Church and the success of her ministry.

The plausibility of the alleged conspiracy

It is to be noted that in Dr Cooper's scheme Tischendorf is aware that his role is deceptively to present as ancient what he knows to be a recent forgery; and he is himself involved in deliberately tampering with the manuscript to destroy evidence pointing to its recent production.⁷ The difficulty that Dr Cooper faces in establishing such a thesis is that he can produce no actual evidence that Tischendorf believed that the Codex was forged. When we look at Tischendorf's communications – not only

⁷ Dr Cooper does not make it clear at what point he claims Tischendorf came to know about Simonides' role in the plot. Dr Cooper states (p.16) that as of 1843 Tischendorf 'was clearly being set up for the task ahead of him on a Wagnerian level, and the poor man just could not see it.' 1843 is thus a *terminus post quem*. On p.73 Dr Cooper charges Tischendorf with cutting out large portions from the leaves of the Codex around 1859 in order to remove evidence of Simonides' authorship. He renews the charge on p.92 that Tischendorf 'butchered and destroyed' a leaf 'undoubtedly in order to extract and destroy an identifying mark of Simonides.' 1859 is thus a *terminus ante quem*. But quite when Tischendorf went from being a dupe, being set up but not knowing it, to being a willing, knowing, and active conspirator Dr Cooper does not say.

his published writings, but his private letters, or indeed reports by others of conversations with him – we find not the slenderest evidence that Tischendorf ever expressed an opinion or a doubt that Codex Sinaiticus was anything other than genuinely ancient. Circumstantial evidence might lend weight to actual evidence, but without actual evidence any attribution of foul play would be unsafe.

Moreover, no qualified palaeographer who has had opportunity physically to inspect the document has doubted that the manuscript was produced centuries before the nineteenth. Dr Cooper may consider that Tischendorf had ulterior motives in passing off as genuine what he knew to be a fake, and that he was a willing accomplice of the Vatican. However, similar dishonourable motives cannot be attributed to all the experts in all generations and countries since then. Indeed, if one wishes to advance a hypothesis that Codex Sinaiticus is a nineteenth century forgery, then in order to avoid falling into the trap of conspiracy theory one would need to maintain that experts since 1844 have been universally mistaken because the alleged forgery was brilliantly executed. A conspiracy theorist, on the other hand, would maintain that forgery is widely and secretly acknowledged among the experts, but universally denied by them publicly as part of a conspiracy. But since Dr Cooper refuses to countenance that the alleged forgery *is* brilliantly executed – he repeatedly states that there are ‘telltale signs’ of forgery on nearly every page that are ‘very amateurishly done’ and thus blindingly obvious to any expert⁸ – he voluntarily and firmly positions himself in the camp of the conspiracy theorist: all the experts can see that it is a fake, but are deliberately suppressing the facts.⁹

As for there being a *genuine* conspiracy, we are obliged to point out that Dr Cooper’s proposal would be well below standard for a Jesuit plot having the full backing of the Vatican. At the very least, in the planning of such a conspiracy, two important elements would be necessary to be maintained: (i) to ensure that the appointed scribe was never in a position to reveal his role in being commissioned to create a codex of the whole Bible on expensive parchment; and (ii) to ensure that the scribe could never identify as his own the modified and distressed version of his work. However, since (according to Dr Cooper’s thesis) the scribe was to be kept entirely ignorant of the alleged Jesuit scheme, he would have no inclination or motive to hide

⁸ For example, ‘Almost every page of the manuscript bears telltale signs of forgery, mostly involving fading the text and discolouring the page in a most amateurish attempt to make it much older than it truly is.’ (p.105); ‘the forgers at Sinai had made all the mistakes that forgers commonly make’(p.86); ‘every single one of the telltale signs of forgery...is evident on the pages of Codex Sinaiticus – almost every page’ (p.88); ‘almost every page of the British Library segment bears the telltale signs of the forger’s hand.’ (p.89).

⁹ Simonides likewise cast himself into the same camp by stating that ‘Any person learned in palaeography ought to be able to tell at once that it is a MS of the present age.’ Since many learned palaeographers have come and gone since that statement was made in the 1860s, and none have agreed with Simonides, then the implication is that all palaeographers without exception have been involved in an ongoing conspiracy.

his role in producing such a splendid work, and might reveal his commission at any time. Moreover, the *distressed* work would likely come to his attention if it were blazed abroad as a great discovery. It does not appear that any effective preventive measures were taken to keep the two main actors, Simonides and Tischendorf, apart; on the contrary it was likely that they would interact, for they were both scouring the world for ancient manuscripts, the former to sell, and the latter for academic purposes.

Accordingly, as a conspiracy it appears implausible because it has a concatenation of weak points that could be expected to derail and expose it. It would be a textbook example of *inept planning*. Surely a Jesuitical plot backed by the full panoply of the Roman Church could have avoided *all* the aforementioned problems of interaction and discovery by having Simonides come by an unfortunate 'accident' shortly after delivery of his codex, since he would have been useful only up to that point, and become a total liability to the success of the plot afterwards as a potential whistleblower who knew far too much. Yet he lived and travelled throughout Europe and the Ottoman and Russian empires after his alleged delivery of the codex in August 1840 until his death in 1890, aged about 65.

Moreover, a number of incidents occurred, any one of which would have blown apart the conspiracy proposed by Dr Cooper, demonstrating *inept execution*. For example, according to Dr Cooper's thesis, Tischendorf arrived at St Catherine's monastery not according to the Jesuit plan but fully fifteen years early, and (not according to plan) saw the manuscript openly, and (not according to plan) carried away with him a portion of the codex that looked nothing like as old as it ought to have done (if according to the plan) because the alleged work of distressing had not been started. Furthermore, (surely not according to plan) no satisfactory attempt was made to prevent important visitors seeing the codex during the 1840s and 50s and being able to report publicly what they had seen (as indeed did happen, surely not according to plan), or indeed find a way to remove the manuscript before Tischendorf (which could well have happened if the Russian government had followed Uspensky's advice, see below). It seems then that Dr Cooper's thesis silently concedes that the Vatican and the Jesuits had grossly inept planning and execution, and lost control of their plot by 1844 at the latest. And yet he can imagine 'Jesuit forgers' secretly embedded in an Orthodox monastery in Sinai soldiering on undetected in disaster recovery mode 'producing a codex that could bear timely witness to Vaticanus'.

The present reviewer suggests that to be plausible any alleged conspiracy must take account of the strong likelihood that Simonides and Tischendorf would interact in the 1840s and 50s—as indeed they did in Leipzig in 1855-6—and of the fact that Simonides was free to promote his story from the relative safety of England during the 1860s. Those who accept Simonides' account, such as Dr Cooper, believe that his

motive for telling his story was entirely honourable: to advance the cause of truth;¹⁰ in this scenario Simonides forever remains unaware of his role in a Jesuit plot, and his involvement with it was unintended, exhausted on delivery of the codex, and counterproductive thereafter. Those who do not believe Simonides' account see his motivation as petty jealousy against Tischendorf, having fallen out with him in Leipzig in 1856. Either way, the motivation of Simonides is rather personal and not seen to be serving a wider purpose: he is not aware of any Romish conspiracy, and is not himself a conspirator. The present reviewer considers that both viewpoints have failed to make inferences to the best explanation, which is that Simonides was not acting alone and *knowingly* played an active role as a 'front' man in a bigger (non-Roman Catholic) scheme, which appealed to his antipathy towards Tischendorf. It is well documented that he had done a very similar thing in the 1840s in a newspaper campaign in Greece in which he acted the part of a false witness and accuser, inventing lying narratives to serve a wider cause, which also happened to appeal to him.

Character and background

It is notable that, to buttress his thesis, Dr Cooper paints Tischendorf very negatively, stating that he had 'flaws in his character' (p.13), and identifying such flaws as 'colossal vanity' (pp.14 and 18), 'enlarged ego' (p.15), and a 'weakness for honours and admiration' (p.18). However, the reader will look in vain for clues about the character of Constantine Simonides, upon whom Dr Cooper relies so much, for he attempts to establish his thesis about an attack on the Bible and the church using Simonides as the main 'witness for the prosecution'. Whilst he admits that Simonides' 'reverence for the Old and New Testaments was worse than abysmal', and that in regard to the text of Scripture 'His powers of discernment...were virtually nil, and this shows itself to an appalling degree' (p.29), these flaws are passed over as mere passive failings, and no consideration is given to character flaws that betray a criminal or devilish mind. Not a word escapes Dr Cooper's pen about how Simonides threatened personal violence against Christian ministers, whipped up murderous mobs to do the deed, and gloried in and boasted of his 'greatest exertions' to destroy the Protestant Evangelical church, its ministers and their families, by submitting to newspapers 'the most outrageous lies that human or diabolical ingenuity ever invented' — actions to which he willingly and brazenly affixed his name, and from which he never resiled. We consider that Protestant readers of Dr Cooper's book who have a care for the kingdom of Christ ought to have been made aware of these material facts, concerning which Dr Cooper is strangely silent. We shall not omit to inform the reader.

¹⁰ In his letter to *The Guardian* of September 3, 1862 he states 'I solemnly declare that my only motive for publishing this letter is to advance the cause of truth, and protect sacred letters from imposition.' Given that Simonides is notorious for his profuse lies and deceptions throughout Europe since 1846, such a solemn declaration is not worth a straw. Simonides' life was the polar opposite of advancing the cause of truth. The Jonas King affair (from 1846) is incontrovertible evidence that he invented and disseminated diabolical lies.

Indeed, there is precious little biographical material about Simonides in Dr Cooper's book apart from Simonides' own accounts, which can readily be shown to be false for the most part. As if from nowhere, Simonides breezes into Dr Cooper's account in 1860 to tell his incredible tale, and then disappears just as quickly into oblivion a few years later. Had Dr Cooper included some *genuine* biographical details and back story from the vast collection of extant records about Simonides' life then his readers would at least have known that Simonides had achieved international notoriety from the mid-1840s onwards—known even to the President and Congress of the USA as 'a swindler...notorious throughout Turkey, Russia, and Greece as an imposter, counterfeiter, and cheat'. His reputation as a master forger is solidly secure and unsurpassed to this day, as the faked artefacts he left behind all over Europe still attest; indeed he is widely regarded by scholars and curators as the greatest forger of the nineteenth century, if not of all time. Dr Cooper brushes all this aside with the comment that this 'widely-held reputation of being a forger of ancient manuscripts...that has stuck fast to this day' was said *by Simonides* to be a 'calumny' (p.31).

The claim that Simonides wrote Codex Sinaiticus is now on its third lease of life. Its first appearance of course was when Simonides himself put the story about in the 1860s, though it fizzled out after a few years. The story resurfaced in the early 1930s when public money was used to purchase the Codex from the Soviet Union for the British Museum, and donations were sought from the public: questions were raised about its authenticity, and the story from the 1860s was revived briefly. Looking back three or four years to that time, Frederick G. Kenyon, Director and Principal Librarian of the British Museum wrote:

An ingenious Greek, Constantine Simonides...[claimed to have written] the Codex Sinaiticus, which he had copied from a Moscow Bible in about six months at Mt. Athos in 1840. The story was patently absurd; for in 1840 Simonides was only 15 years old, he could not have obtained 350 large leaves of ancient vellum (modern vellum is quite different), he could not have copied it in six months, and no Moscow edition of the Bible with a similar text exists. Moreover the codex is written by at least three different scribes, and has a large number of corrections in various hands. The story is merely one of the comedies of crime, and is only worth mentioning because it has been recently revived. The character of Simonides is further illustrated by the fact that he subsequently claimed to have discovered among the Egyptian collections of a Liverpool gentleman a papyrus copy of St. Matthew written fifteen years after the Ascension, with fragments of first-century manuscripts of the Epistles of St. James and St. Jude and other equally surprising documents. These ingenious forgeries may still be seen at Liverpool.¹¹

¹¹ F.G. Kenyon, *The Text of the Greek Bible*, (London, 1937).

The third surfacing of the story that Simonides wrote Codex Sinaiticus has been occasioned by the 'blogosphere'.¹² It appears that Dr Cooper has assembled much of his material and many of ideas in his book from internet sites. It is also clear that Dr Cooper has not checked in the original documents all the citations he has made—or if he has, then he has misunderstood the contexts and arguments of the authors. Either way his approach is deeply unsatisfactory, as will be shown below.

A matter of methodology

Dr Cooper's book ranges over a great many lines of inquiry and is an interesting recital of all the evidence he feels supports his thesis.¹³ But this is also its greatest weakness, for his methodology tends to beg the question: it assumes the very thing that it sets out to prove and does not deal adequately with evidence that weakens and undermines his thesis. Indeed, due to his many errors of fact, the evidence sometimes weighs against the very thesis that he is proposing. In short, it is a *misuse* of the inductive method, marshalling only those 'facts' that support the thesis, and that can be classified as 'facts' when interpreted by the thesis itself. It does not even approach the 'hypothetical inductive' method of inference to the best explanation:

In general, there will be several hypotheses which might explain the evidence, so one must be able to reject all such alternative hypotheses before one is warranted in making the inference. Thus one infers, from the premise that a given hypothesis would provide a "better" explanation for the evidence than would any other hypothesis, to the conclusion that the given hypothesis is true...When a detective puts the evidence together...he is reasoning that no other explanation which accounts for all the facts is plausible enough or simple enough to be accepted.¹⁴

As we shall see in abundance, Dr Cooper's method, rather than of inference to the best explanation, moves from his chosen explanation to inference: his desired explanation drives all the inferences.

¹² The blogosphere is freighted with conspiracy theories. Those who resort to internet sites as a source of information are destined to repeat and recycle innumerable errors. Many bloggers do not understand the points being dealt with, do not understand basic logic and how to spot and avoid fallacies, do not have the necessary ability in critical thinking, and do not understand methods of research. Moreover, there is no peer review, or even a sanity check. Many recycle statements taken out of context copied without checking their sources *ad fontes*, or properly understanding the things that they write. Among such in recent years we can mention David W. Daniels, who produced a book *Is the 'World's Oldest Bible' a Fake?*, Chris Pinto, who produced a video *Tares among the Wheat*, which includes details about Codex Sinaiticus, and the many blog posts by 'Steven Avery' (= Steven Avery Spencer). These are deeply flawed and unbalanced, and to a greater or lesser extent they utilize the methods of conspiracy theory. Many of the arguments that these writers consider to be most compelling (among themselves) are based on gross misunderstandings of the evidence, and a complete failure to deal with, and in many cases even acknowledge, countervailing evidence. In so doing they are doing great disservice to the causes they claim to espouse.

¹³ Yet without an index, which is a serious omission.

¹⁴ Harman, *The Inference to the Best Explanation*. Philosophical Review 74: 88–95 (1965).

At the very least, when constructing a far-reaching thesis, one must clear the ground by neutralizing possible objections. But although Dr Cooper references the work of textual critic J.K. Elliott,¹⁵ he does not deal with the mass of objections that Elliott brings against Simonides' authorship.¹⁶ Moreover, Dr Cooper does not appear to have engaged with much of the relevant scholarship on the writing of the Codex itself, such as Dirk Jongkind's important doctoral dissertation *Scribal Habits of Codex Sinaiticus*, published in 2007, which is readily obtainable and would be essential reading before constructing such a thesis: there are no allusions or references to this work in Dr Cooper's book, including in the bibliography. Neither has he consulted A.C. Myshrall's PhD thesis, *Codex Sinaiticus, its Correctors, and the Caesarean Text of the Gospels* (2005), for if he had he would not have made so many elementary blunders in his so-called forensics. Neither is there reference to any of the papers presented at the 2009 international conference on Codex Sinaiticus held at the British Library, proceedings of which (ed. Scot McKendrick *et al*) were published as *Codex Sinaiticus: New Perspectives on the Ancient Biblical Manuscript* under the auspices of the British Library. The proceedings included four papers on the modern history of Codex Sinaiticus, among them *The Recovery of the New Finds at Sinai: A First-hand Report* by Panayotis G. Nikolopoulos, Professor Emeritus in the Department of Philology at the University of Athens. As Director of the National Library of Greece and editor of the 287-page book *The New Finds of Sinai* (Athens, 1999), Nikolopoulos was actively involved in identifying more parts of Codex Sinaiticus discovered at St Catherine's monastery in 1975. Existence of these publications does not appear consistent with Dr Cooper's repeated assertions that there is nothing in the literature about the New Finds in relation to Sinaiticus, such that 'this latest cache of pages has gone unreported in the scholarly press' (p.73).¹⁷ Likewise these proceedings include the

¹⁵ J.K. Elliott, *Codex Sinaiticus and the Simonides Affair* (Thessaloniki, 1982).

¹⁶ Even Dr Cooper's account of obtaining a copy of Elliott (which the present reviewer is fortunate enough to possess) is a dissuasive to the reader to discover any objections for himself since (he claims) it is 'exceedingly hard to get hold of', and one has to 'pay a small fortune' to obtain a copy (p.28).

¹⁷ Dr Cooper states that 'The find was reported in *The Independent* newspaper – and in one or two other newspapers as well' (p.70). Since *The Independent* did not come into existence until 1986, the suggestion is that excessive time elapsed before mention was made in the press. Dr Cooper confuses two different finds: he quotes an article from *The Independent* newspaper that appeared in 2009, stating that 'one of the Sinaiticus fragments was recognised by a British academic named Nikolas Sarris from a photograph, and one would think that in the forty years that have passed since that day, at least one scholarly report on the find would have been made'. Sarris is Greek, and had not even been born by 1975, nor have forty years passed since 2009. **What Sarris found, and what *The Independent* reported, was not related to the 1975 'New Finds', but was part of the Codex that Sarris noticed in the binding of a volume bound by St Catherine's in 1727.** If one wishes to see reports of the 1975 'New Finds' one must consult 1970s newspapers and press releases. Dr Cooper has overlooked that the finds became public knowledge in 1977, and were covered by mainstream newspapers during 1978, including *The Washington Post* (July 7, 1978), 'A three-year-old discovery of ancient manuscripts, including nine pages of the Codex Sinaiticus, a fourth-century Greek Bible, has recently come to light... **The 1975 discovery, kept secret until now...is believed to be the most important**

evidence of fragments of Codex Sinaiticus that were re-used in eighteenth century bookbindings, which clearly rules out a nineteenth century origin.

Instead, Dr Cooper introduces his reader to a number of problems concerning the authenticity of the codex, and provides seeming resolutions to these conundrums in line with his thesis without presenting alternative explanations or hypotheses that might be more plausible. Since the reader cannot be expected to have any information at his disposal other than that selected and proffered by Dr Cooper himself, the resolutions he proposes may likely be accepted simply because they are the only ones on offer. This approach is counterproductive and poor apologetics: it may convince less discriminating or less well informed readers that the author's thesis is persuasive, but it will undermine confidence among the more scientifically discerning and literate, and – more importantly – it ill serves those who are in a position to challenge the academic community. Should Dr Cooper after all be right that men have been unwitting pawns used by the Vatican to produce a manuscript that gave support to Vaticanus against the *Textus Receptus*, nonetheless his methods used to demonstrate such a finding are far from satisfactory, and many of his conclusions drawn therefrom unsound.

Having made such sweeping methodological criticisms we are obliged in all fairness to Dr Cooper and his readers to give specific examples, and to such we now turn.

discovery in the field of biblical studies since 1844.' *The Sunday Times*: 'A major find has been some 14 leaves of vellum which exactly match the Codex Sinaiticus in the British Museum. They contain passages from the Book of Genesis—which is missing from the British Museum's Codex. At the moment Archbishop Damianos, Abbot of St. Catherine's keeps them. They have not yet been photographed.' Also *The Biblical Archaeologist* in 1978 reported pages from Codex Sinaiticus being in the find. Dr Cooper even makes reference to an account of the discovery given in *Biblical Archeologist* in 1979 in relation to the panic among the monks at the discovery, but the same article explicitly states that leaves from Codex Sinaiticus were among the finds, and quotes press reports from the previous year. *The Sunday Times Magazine* of October 29, 1978 in an article entitled 'Riddle of the Sands' by M. Modiano reported as follows: 'The manuscripts were found on 26 May 1975. A few days earlier a fire had gutted the chapel of St. George, which is built into the massive walls of the north side of the monastery, and the monks decided to lessen the likelihood of another fire by clearing a quantity of dried scrub from the storeroom below the chapel. When they had done so, they discovered, next to the storeroom, a disused cell filled with earth and mud, and they set about clearing that also. It was there that they found the immense pile of manuscripts...[I]t appears that the last documents on the pile date from about 1750...Whatever the reason for their presence in the cell, the ceiling must have one day caved in, and thereafter they were somehow forgotten...There is lasting resentment that the great German scholar von Tischendorf removed from the monastery the Codex Sinaiticus...then claimed that the monks had intended to light fires with it...the fact that the latest discovery at St. Catherine's includes some of the missing pages gives the measure of its importance.'

Application of Method

From as early as the third page of the main text (p.11), in Chapter 1 entitled 'Tales of Tischendorf', it becomes all too clear that Dr Cooper intends to take his reader down the path of conspiracy theory. Here we are told (p.11) that

The bait with which [Tischendorf] was hooked was the papal permission to view Codex Vaticanus, the first time any non-Catholic had been allowed anywhere near it.

This and the similar claim that 'No Protestant had ever been allowed near this treasure before, it was so jealously guarded' (p.22) are demonstrably false. Access was curtailed only after its return to Rome in 1815, having been carried away to Paris as spoil by Napoleon in 1809: the accounts of Tregelles, Tischendorf, and others, who recorded difficulty accessing it, are subsequent to that date.¹⁸ A major reason for limiting access is to be found in the desire for Roman scholars to produce their own typographical facsimile, as Scrivener comments, 'What the Papal authorities would not entrust to others, they had at least the merit of attempting and at length accomplishing themselves'.¹⁹ Little access could be expected while Angelo Mai exercised his authority in the Vatican Library from 1819-53, because being the first to produce a facsimile was his own special project.²⁰ It appeared posthumously in 1857, followed by New Testament editions based on Mai's work by Kuenen and Cobet in 1860, and Philipp Buttmann in 1860, and all seriously defective. In 1866 Tischendorf sought permission from Pope Pius IX to produce an accurate facsimile edition, but

[T]he Pope, who was ostensibly contemplating a new edition of Codex Vaticanus...(no doubt because of the disaster of Mai's edition...)...refused...[and] was not inclined to grant Tischendorf much time to see the manuscript...[He was] caught copying the manuscript and forbidden from copying it further.²¹

Contrary to Dr Cooper's assertions, Protestants had easy access to Codex Vaticanus in the eighteenth century. By examining it in Rome, Anglican Thomas Bentley collated Codex Vaticanus, and checked the collations done by Mico in 1720 for his more famous uncle Richard Bentley.²² Writing from Rome to his uncle in 1726, Thomas Bentley informs him that

¹⁸ We might add that restricting the collation of Codex Vaticanus by Protestant scholars would have been counterproductive if the aim of the Vatican was to spread spurious Greek readings, since spurious readings therein abound.

¹⁹ F.H.A. Scrivener, *A plain introduction to the criticism of the New Testament for the use of Biblical students* (Cambridge, 1861), p.90.

²⁰ Tischendorf himself stated that in this regard the Vatican authorities acted no differently from libraries in the rest of Europe.

²¹ S.E. Porter, *Constantine Tischendorf: The Life and Work of a 19th Century Bible Hunter* (2015), p.50.

²² In 1729 Richard Bentley engaged Rulotta to make corrections to Mico's work.

I have seen most of the testaments in the Vatican. The finest and oldest is of all the Bible, which I suppose is that Mico collated...The writing is not unlike that of the Alexandrian MS., only there's a gentle division of words. As to the accents, I can answer you with certainty, that they are added by another hand, but an old one. The person that added them has also taken a strange piece of pains, to retouch every letter in the book...When I had got the book into my hands, I spent near the whole time of the Library in it...I send you the collation...I collated it with Rob. Steph. Ed. Fol. M.D.L [1550].²³

Thus Thomas Horne could declare in 1818 that

The Vatican manuscript has been repeatedly collated by various eminent critics, from whose extracts Wetstein collected numerous various readings: but the latest and best collation is that by Professor Birch, of Copenhagen, in 1781.²⁴

This Danish *Lutheran* scholar (later Bishop) Andreas Birch spent considerable time in the Vatican Library collating the various New Testament readings in important Greek manuscripts there, including Codex Vaticanus. The fruit of his work appeared in 1788,²⁵ and then in 1801.²⁶

Dr Cooper then moves on to the funding of Tischendorf's travels in the 1840s. Because young Tischendorf was not a wealthy man in the early 1840s Dr Cooper says (p.11),

We are being asked [by Tischendorf] to believe...that he was able to rack up a \$5,000 travel and accommodation bill over five years through several countries on unsecured credit and as a penniless itinerant to boot.

Not so. Tischendorf himself tells us in the work that Dr Cooper cites (which he must surely have read) that he acquired several eminent patrons who funded his further travels:

The Saxon Government came forward to support me... and several eminent patrons of learning at Frankfort, Geneva, Rome, and Breslau generously offered to interest themselves in my attempt.²⁷

²³ Reproduced in *The Correspondence of Richard Bentley*, D. D., Master of Trinity College, Cambridge, Vol. 2 (London, 1842).

²⁴ T. H. Horne, *Introduction to the Critical Study and Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures* (1818). This statement, made in 1818, further demonstrates the falsity of Dr Cooper's assertion (p.23) that 'Codex Vaticanus had been kept out of the public eye for so many centuries'.

²⁵ *Quatuor Evangelia Graece: cum variantibus a textu lectionibus codd. Mss. Bibliothecae Vaticanae* etc.

²⁶ *Variae Lectiones Ad Textum IV Evangeliorum, ex Codd. Mss. Bibliothecae Vaticanae* (1801)

²⁷ C. Tischendorf, *When were our Gospels Written?* (London, 1867), p.22. Second edition as used by Dr Cooper.

Though Tischendorf was fairly impecunious when he set out for Paris (he had 50 thalers), he had sufficient to live on from day to day, and as yet had no family to support.²⁸ He procured credit for several hundred thalers *secured* against an insurance policy on his own life. For two years he was guaranteed 100 thalers per year by the Saxon government, which was then extended. He received royalties on his edition of the Greek New Testament and on his other works as they issued from the press. In Paris he negotiated with the printer F. Didot for the issue of editions of works he had published in Leipzig, notably his *Novum Testamentum* (Paris, 1842, 1843 etc). He also collated the Paris manuscripts of Philo for Prof. Grossmann at Leipzig, and the only remaining manuscript of the 60th book of the Basilicas for Dr Heimbach at Jena, and various other commissions, and was paid for his efforts. As Caspar Gregory remarks, 'This was the bread-and-butter...meant to increase his funds so that he might visit all places containing manuscripts.'²⁹

The matter of funding had already arisen in the mid-nineteenth century, and its explanation well known at that time. For example, two writers, one French and the other German, anticipated the question in the readers' minds:

It was in 1840 that Mr Tischendorf had left Leipzig for Paris with about fifty thalers; in the spring of 1844 he embarked at Livorno for Egypt and Palestine. But, it will be said, we are no longer in the time of the apostles; so by what secret could a scholar without a fortune be able to carry out such enterprises?³⁰

²⁸ He married Angelika on September 18, 1845, which was after he had returned from his first trip to the East.

²⁹ *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol XXXIII (London, 1876), pp.153-193. Gregory adds, '[H]e supported himself by side work, and by the editions of the New Testament. For the journey to the East he again needed the help of others. The Saxon government, the banker Seyfferheld at Frankfort, Favre Bertrand at Geneva, [August] Kestner the Hanoverian agent at Rome, and David Schulz, the old professor at Breslau, supplied him with funds.'

³⁰ Saint-René Taillandier, *Une Mission Russe en Palestine - M. Tischendorf et le grand-duc Constantin*, in *Revue des Deux Mondes* (1865), pp.79-109. 'C'est en 1840 que M. Tischendorf était parti de Leipzig pour Paris avec une cinquantaine de thalers; au printemps de 1844, il s'embarquait à Livourne pour l'Égypte et la Palestine, — Mais, dira-t-on, nous ne sommes plus au temps des apôtres; par quel secret un savant sans fortune a-t-il pu mener à bien de telles entreprises? On a déjà vu que le gouvernement saxon, d'abord assez indifférent à ses travaux, commençait à s'en faire honneur, et lui avait accordé à Rome une protection efficace. Nous avons dit aussi que plusieurs de ses confiées s'intéressaient à lui, du fond de l'Allemagne, et lui confiaient des recherches spéciales qu'ils rétribuaient de leur bourse. Ce budget extraordinaire s'était accru depuis 1840. Quand on sut que M. Tischendorf voulait explorer les richesses manuscrites de l'Orient chrétien depuis les couvents du Caire jusqu'aux couvents du Sinaï, comme il avait exploré d'Oxford à Naples toutes les bibliothèques de l'Europe, il y eut une sorte d'émulation parmi ses bienfaiteurs. La liste en est touchante, et nous pouvons bien la mentionner en passant, puisque M. Tischendorf a considéré, comme un devoir de la proclamer dans les préfaces de ses livres. On y rencontre les noms d'un banquier de Francfort, M. Seyfferheld, d'un riche propriétaire de Genève, M. Favre-Bertrand, à côté du nom du roi de Saxe et du diplomate hanovrien M. Kestner. Les savants y ont aussi leur place: l'illustre M. de Wette et le vénérable David, Schulz n'ont pas été les

After these numerous Italian works stood Tischendorf's fiery yearning for the Orient, for the promised land. However, before going into detail about this journey to the Orient, a little stop is here made to envisage the financial side of these travel movements. For how was and was it possible – as some readers will undoubtedly recall, who remember that our traveller with the most modest travel fund, barely sufficient for a few months, set out for Paris in October 1840 – how could he continue with his travels? ³¹

Both these writers enlighten their readers in detail (see footnotes), the latter even giving the amounts donated by each donor, and at length summing up,

In this way, the young man...was able to carry out almost five years of scientific travels through a large part of Europe, through parts of Africa and Asia, with an expenditure of 5,000 thalers.

derniers à envoyer leur obole. « David Schulz, dit M. Tischendorf, ne m'a écrit dans toute sa vie qu'une seule lettre un peu grondeuse; c'est le jour où je lui ai restitué cette avance. » Souvenons-nous de cet épisode quand nous sommes portés à médire de notre siècle; y eut-il jamais charité plus délicate pour venir en aide à un pèlerinage plus noble?'

³¹ J.E. Volbeding, *Constantin Tischendorf in seiner fünfundzwanzigjährigen schriftstellerischen Wirksamkeit*, (Leipzig, 1862), 'Denn wie war und ward es möglich – so werden unstreitig manche Leser fragen, die sich erinnern, dass unser Reisender mit dem bescheidensten, kaum auf wenige Monate ausreichenden Reisefonds im October 1840 nach Paris aufbrach – wie war es möglich, dass er in solcher Ausdehnung seine Reisen fortsetzte? Indem Tischendorf handschriftliche Schätze sammelte, die er in späterer Zeit zu verwerthen gedachte, gelang es ihm zugleich, so zu sagen, in den Mussestunden solche Arbeiten zu vollenden, aus deren Ertrage seine Subsistenzmittel flossen. Dergleichen waren, wie oben schon angeführt, die Philonischen Collationen und die Basiliken-Arbeit; ferner die zwei neuen bei Firmin Didot gedruckten Ausgaben des Neuen Testaments; endlich kam hierzu auch das Honorar für den Codex Ephraemi. Die Königl. Sächsische Regierung ihrerseits, bei welcher es der Oberhofprediger von Ammon und der Geheime Rath von Langenn, damals Erzieher des Kronprinzen, an ihrer warmen Vertretung nicht fehlen liessen, erneuerte und verdoppelte wiederholt ihre Unterstützung. Dies geschah besonders seit 1843 in Folge des persönlichen Interesses, das König Friedrich August an dem jungen Gelehrten nahm. Der dem Könige schriftlich ausgesprochene Wunsch einer Reise nach Jerusalem wurde mit einer Unterstützung von fast 1000 Thalern durch das Ministerium von Wietersheim beantwortet. Ausserdem fanden sich aber auch noch andere Gönner, die das begeisterte, der Aufhellung und Ergründung der Urkunden unseres Glaubens gewidmete Streben jeder Förderung werth achteten. Ein solcher Gönner war der bekannte Bankier Seyfferheld zu Frankfurt, der durch de Wettes Vermittlung 300 Gulden an Tischendorf gelangen liess; ein anderer war Favre Bertrand zu Genf, der ihm 200 Frs. nach Florenz überschickte, sowie die gleiche Summe von dem als Literator und Kunstfreund bekannten Hannöverschen Geschäftsträger Kestner zu Rom dargebracht ward. Und zwar geschah dies grossentheils ohne alle Anregung von Tischendorfs Seite. Auch jener hochsinnige Fachgenosse, David Schulz zu Breslau, liess es nicht blos bei seinen Empfehlungen des für die kritischen Bibelforschungen so wichtigen Unternehmens bewenden; er übersandte auf Tischendorfs Wunsch bereitwilligst 200 Thaler nach Neapel und nur einmal schrieb der würdige alte Herr fast unfreundlich an seinen jungen Freund; es war die Antwort auf den Brief, worin ihm der nicht zurückerwartete Vorschuss restituirt worden war...Auf diese Weise konnte der mit so geringer Baarschaft aus Leipzig geschiedene junge Mann fast fünfjährige wissenschaftliche Reisen durch einen grossen Theil Europas, durch Theile von Afrika und Asien mit einem Aufwande von 5000 Thalern ausführen.'

So we now start to discern the *modus operandi*. Dr Cooper mentions the large total expenditure of 5000 thalers ('dollars'), but does not disclose the publicly available details of where Tischendorf actually obtained his funds, though the donors and the amounts donated are well known. He thus leaves his readers uninformed, and instead expects them to trust him (contrary to evidence) that the funds came from the Vatican. More than that, he conjectures that the Jesuits ran a veritable travel agency for Tischendorf (p.13):

[A]s we shall presently see...the Vatican, through the Jesuits, funded his journeys...[and] supplied him with money, travel arrangements, accommodation, letters, and anything else he might need...as well as the necessarily fat purse.³²

This is pure invention. Given the litany of arrangements and funds that the Vatican is said to have supplied, the reader could reasonably expect evidence to be provided for at least some of them. Yet none is supplied. In the light of the truth, the conjectured case for Jesuit funding collapses.

Tischendorf's fame established by transcribing Codex C

Dr Cooper's thesis seeks to establish that Codex Sinaiticus is a Vatican-inspired nineteenth century forgery, produced to support Codex Vaticanus (Codex B) which, he claims, is a fifteenth century Vatican-inspired forgery, with additional nineteenth century forged elements. But now another very important uncial manuscript is brought into his purview (p.14), Codex C, the Ephraemi Rescriptus, a palimpsest whose original writing of Scripture had been overwritten. This had been brought to Florence following the fall of Constantinople in 1453, and later transferred to Paris. Tischendorf with great pains deciphered and transcribed it in Paris, and won international recognition and acclaim for his publication of the New Testament portion of it in 1843, at the age of 27. As Milligan notes, Tischendorf spoke of

the *indefessa studia* which for two years he expended upon the Codex Ephraemi, in the National Library at Paris; but the successful execution of that work established his reputation, and smoothed his whole future course.³³

Tischendorf's involvement and success here appears to have tweaked Dr Cooper's conspiracy antennae, such that the recovery of the text of this great uncial becomes

³² Dr Cooper concludes that because Tischendorf acquired 'considerably more than fifty' manuscripts on his first trip to the Orient then he must have had sources of large funds: 'Even in those days, unless he is a thief, no man could possibly acquire such collections without massive funding. So where did that funding come from?' We have their names. Dr Cooper would do better to ask the same question of Simonides. He went to Russia in 1841 and emerged five years later with thousands of manuscripts, dwarfing Tischendorf's collection. How could *Simonides* 'possibly acquire such collections without massive funding?'

³³ W. Milligan, *Tischendorf and Tregelles as Editors of the Greek New Testament*, in *The British and Foreign Evangelical Review*, Vol XXV (January, 1876), p.125.

yet another of those matters 'expressly intended to advance the Vatican's cause of overthrowing or replacing the Textus Receptus' (p.14). Dr Cooper quotes Tischendorf himself as follows:

I had just completed at the time a work which had been very favourably received in Europe, and for which I had received marks of approval from several learned bodies, and even from crowned heads.

Tischendorf himself, as expected, immediately tells us what this celebrated work was, from his very next sentence. But Dr Cooper fails to set before his reader the details of the work that Tischendorf himself describes. Without that important information, and shorn of all context, anything could be said about this work and the reader would be none the wiser. We therefore supply Tischendorf's sentence quoted by Dr Cooper in its original context so that the reader can verify that Tischendorf is unquestionably speaking about his published transcription of Codex Ephraemi Rescriptus,³⁴ and of the recognition and support he received directly therefrom, which led to international support for his travels to the East:

These considerations have, ever since the year 1842, fired me with a strong desire to visit the East. I had just completed at the time a work which had been very favourably received in Europe, and for which I had received marks of approval from several learned bodies, and even from crowned heads.

The work I advert to was this. There lay in one of the libraries of Paris one of the most important manuscripts then known of the Greek text. This parchment manuscript, the writing of which, of the date of the fifth century, had been retouched and renewed in the seventh, and again in the ninth century, had, in the twelfth century, been submitted to a twofold process. It had been washed and pumiced, to write on it the treatises of an old father of the Church of the name of Ephrem. Five centuries later, a Swiss theologian of the name of Wetstein had attempted to decipher a few traces of the original manuscript; and, later still, another theologian, Griesbach of Jena, came to try his skill on it, although the librarian assured him that it was impossible for mortal eye to decipher a writing which had disappeared for six centuries. In spite of these unsuccessful attempts, the French Government had recourse to powerful chemical reagents, to bring out the effaced characters. But a Leipzig theologian, who was then at Paris, was so unsuccessful in this new attempt, that he asserted that it was impossible to produce an edition of this text, as the manuscript was quite illegible. It was after all these attempts that I began, in 1841-2, to try my skill at the manuscript, and had the good fortune to decipher it completely, and even to distinguish between the dates of the different writers who had been engaged on the manuscript.

³⁴ Tischendorf, *Codex Ephraemi Syri rescriptus sive fragmenta Novi Testamenti e codice graeco Parisiensi celeberrimo quinti ut videtur post Christum seculi*, (Leipzig, 1843).

This success, which procured for me several marks of recognition and support, encouraged me to proceed. I conceived it to be my duty to complete an undertaking which had hitherto been treated as chimerical. The Saxon Government came forward to support me. The king, Frederick Augustus II, and his distinguished brother, John, sent me marks of their approval; and several eminent patrons of learning at Frankfort, Geneva, Rome, and Breslau generously offered to interest themselves in my attempt.³⁵

Now let us see how Dr Cooper handles Tischendorf's own narrative of the work that Tischendorf himself has so carefully identified, and the recognition and support derived therefrom (p.14):

Later [Tischendorf] adds

"I had just completed at the time a work which had been very favourably received in Europe, and for which I had received marks of approval from several learned bodies, and even from crowned heads."

The footnote to this self-praise tells us:

"M. Tischendorf, then 27 years of age, received from a German University the degree of Doctor of Divinity just as a Swiss University was about to confer it. Three foreign governments decorated him. Others sent him gold medals. The Dutch Government caused one to be engraved expressly in recognition of this work."

The work for which he received such accolades was an edition of a Greek 'New Testament' based, not on any Greek manuscript, but on the Latin Vulgate Bible. It was merely a rendering into Greek of Jerome's erroneous Alexandrian-based 'translation', expressly intended to advance the Vatican's cause of overthrowing or replacing the Textus Receptus.

Since Dr Cooper references a footnote at the foot of the page in Tischendorf's own published narrative we grant that he has read the account *ad fontes*. He is therefore aware that Tischendorf was describing his work on deciphering Codex C, the Ephraemi Rescriptus. Anyone having the slightest familiarity with the life of Tischendorf well knows that he established his international fame by deciphering this codex, so we do not doubt that Dr Cooper knows this also. It is covered in any reasonable biography of Tischendorf, for example Volbeding:

As early as December, 1842, Tischendorf received the first copies of his edition of the Codex Ephraemi in Paris. This work was first and foremost, which aroused the general attention of the learned world, and won the favour of several princely

³⁵ Tischendorf, *When were our Gospels Written?* (London, 1867), pp.21-22. Second edition as used by Dr Cooper. Note that Dr Cooper quotes from pp.20, 21, 23, and 24. It is very clear here where Tischendorf's support came from for his travels to the East.

protectors. As he was honoured by the award of the Northern Star Order with the motto: *Nescit occasum*, and by other similar honours, so also the theological faculty of Breslau felt prompted by David Schulz to appoint him *honoris causa* doctor of theology...[T]he Codex Ephraemi was regarded at that time as a document of German perseverance and determined acumen.³⁶

Readers with even elementary knowledge of Codex C will know that such a description of it as Dr Cooper gives, viz 'merely a rendering into Greek of Jerome's erroneous Alexandrian-based 'translation' ', is untrue. Tischendorf states that it is 'one of the most important manuscripts then known of the Greek text', whereas Dr Cooper counters that the Greek text that Tischendorf published, which directly led to his international fame and offers of support, is based 'not on any Greek manuscript, but on the Latin Vulgate Bible.'

The Codex is extant, and it can easily be verified whether Tischendorf's transcription is of Codex C itself or a translation of the Vulgate. It is the former. Given that Codex C had stumped all other scholars, we hardly think that Tischendorf's fame would have been secure had he merely dashed off a pseudo-transcription by back translating the Latin Vulgate. This objection is, of course, of no weight to the conspiracy theorist since he will have all the experts honouring an enterprise that they know to have been faked just to keep up the conspiracy. Indeed, what Dr Cooper's allegation boils down to is that Tischendorf did not transcribe the Codex at all but merely faked it. This inference is all the more ominous as Dr Cooper is preparing his reader for the main thesis: 'the forging of Codex Sinaiticus'.

It is well established that Codex C, the Ephraemi Rescriptus, is a genuinely ancient Greek manuscript, and Tischendorf's transcription of it was *not* a back translation by him into Greek of Jerome's Vulgate Latin version. Whatever view one takes of the *usefulness* of this uncial codex, Tischendorf's success in accurately transcribing it was a tremendous personal achievement, and worthy of commendation in its own right, all the more so since the task had eluded many eminent men for centuries and had now been accomplished by a young scholar.³⁷ The textual critic Lachmann had

³⁶ J.E. Volbeding, *Constantin Tischendorf in seiner fünfundzwanzigjährigen schriftstellerischen Wirksamkeit*, (Leipzig, 1862), pp.13-14. 'Bereits im December des Jahres 1842 empfang Tischendorf zu Paris die ersten Exemplare seiner Ausgabe des Codex Ephraemi. Dieses Werk war es zunächst und vorzugsweise, welches die allgemeine Aufmerksamkeit der gelehrten Welt erregte, auch die Gunst mehrerer fürstlicher Protectoren seinem Urheber gewann. Wie er durch die Verleihung des Nordsternordens mit der Devise: *Nescit occasum*, und durch andere ähnliche Auszeichnungen geehrt wurde, so fühlte sich auch die theologische Facultät zu Breslau auf Anregung von David Schulz veranlasst, ihn *honoris causa* zum Doctor der Theologie zu ernennen...Wie sehr damals sein Codex Ephraemi als Document deutscher Beharrlichkeit und entschiedenen Scharfsinnes angesehen wurde...'

³⁷ Defenders of the *Textus Receptus* are not slow to recognize Tischendorf's achievement. For example Bishop D.A. Thompson: 'Various scholars had worked at this palimpsest with partial success, but after the device of applying chemicals had been tried, the tireless and enthusiastic Dr. Tischendorf in

declared in 1830 that the scholar who could publish that text would secure immortal fame.

But one would hardly achieve lasting fame and honour for producing a worthless deliverable, i.e. a fake back translation rather than a genuine transcription, and thus Dr Cooper is obliged to explain all this by taking his readers even further into the murky depths of conspiracy theory, suggesting that Tischendorf's fame was manufactured at the command of the Vatican. The following is Dr Cooper's analysis of the wide and lasting recognition afforded Tischendorf for his pains (pp.14-15):

[T]here was (and still remains) one body politic which was able to pull strings simultaneously in many nations of Europe, strings that were then as now attached to their several monarchs and heads of state. In short, it is clear that these bodies had received their instructions to commend and honour one Constantine Tischendorf, a young and hitherto unknown scholar of whom they had never heard, and who would otherwise have remained entirely unknown to them. But they obeyed the instruction and accordingly awarded the honours.

Observant readers will note that this method of argument thus far strongly exhibits the features of conspiracy theory, both in style and method: the supply of false information, crass cynicism, suppression of relevant information, innuendo, begging the question, the assertion that powers were obeying instructions rather than judging matters impartially on their merits, the assertion that something 'is clear' — though not a scrap of evidence is supplied, and the assertion is directly contrary to the facts — that these powers had 'received their instructions' from a body politic — the Vatican. The conspiracy covers the nations, monarchs and heads of state in Tischendorf's day, and necessarily all scholars everywhere up to the present time, who (according to the conspiracy) are secretly aware that Tischendorf had not achieved anything worthwhile but were (and still are!) obeying orders to suppress this information, and instead to credit him falsely with honours.

Dr Cooper is gravely mistaken,³⁸ but he stokes the conspiracy theory further by painting Tischendorf himself as a main player in recipient of covert intelligence (p.15). Having cited Tischendorf's own account that

1843 printed all that it held of the New Testament.' *The Singular Care and Providence of God, and the Textus Receptus*, in *The Bible League Quarterly* (1971).

There are 208 extant leaves. Tischendorf produced his transcript of the 144 New Testament leaves in 1843, and the 64 Old Testament leaves in 1845. In recognition of his decoding the New Testament portion of the Codex Ephraemi Rescriptus he was awarded the degree of Doctor of Divinity by the University of Breslau.

³⁸ It appears that Dr Cooper went looking for a work published by Tischendorf in 1842 and found *He Kaine Diatheke Novum Testamentum Græce et Latine : in antiquis testibus textum versionis Vulgatæ Latinae indagavit lectionesque variantes Stephani et Griesbachii notavit V.S. venerabili Jager in consilium adhibito Constantinus Tischendorf* (Paris, 1842). This blunder is confirmed by his second reference to the work

A learned Englishman, one of my friends, had been sent into the East by his Government to discover and purchase old Greek manuscripts [...] had not even gone so far as Sinai; “for,” as he said in his official report, “after the visit of such an antiquarian and critic as Dr. Tischendorf, I could not expect any success.”

Dr Cooper comments (p.15),

Tischendorf fails to mention by what strange chance he was able to pry into official British government reports from which he could lift this fortuitous quote.

But Dr Cooper fails to mention that the official report for the British government by Henry Coxe of the Bodleian Library published by Her Majesty’s Stationery Office was an unrestricted public document.³⁹



Figure 2 Konstantin Tischendorf (1815-74) as a young man

Such examples as those above, which occur in the first chapter, are typical of what follows in the remainder of Dr Cooper’s book.

on p.42: ‘[Tischendorf] had earned his first flush of fame by retranslating back into Greek Jerome’s corrupt Latin Vulgate Bible.’ Tischendorf did *not* gain any international recognition or fame for *that* unusual work, which was more of a private commission by Abbé Jager (mentioned in the title), a professor in the Sorbonne, who urged him to produce a Greek text conforming to the Vulgate. That job, which any competent person could have done, and would certainly not have attracted international recognition or interest, does not in any way comport with the work that Tischendorf describes in his narrative. This makes us very uncomfortable about Dr Cooper’s handling of evidence.

³⁹ H.O. Coxe, *Report to Her Majesty’s government on the Greek manuscripts yet remaining in libraries of the Levant*, (London, 1858).

A LOOK AT CODEX VATICANUS

When Dr Cooper uses the phrases 'no doubt', 'without any shadow of a doubt', and the like, it is frequently a rhetorical flourish to cover up what is actually doubtful or weak in his argument, and for which proof is wanting. Thus, when Dr Cooper states that at Tischendorf's papal audience 'The Jesuits no doubt reminded the pope that the object of the exercise was...to challenge the *Textus Receptus*' (p.23) he is begging the question and has no proof, for Tischendorf does not recount this and neither do the Roman authorities or any persons present. Likewise he states that Codex Vaticanus 'was composed in Rome by forgers...doubtless shortly before its 'discovery' in 1475' (p.25). We will see what this 'discovery' means shortly, but the reader could be forgiven for believing that all this is historically true rather than mere conjecture. Worse still, Dr Cooper misleads his readers (p.23) in claiming that Vaticanus was a late mediaeval production on grounds that

Its first mention occurs in the Vatican Library Catalogue of 1475 (in which it is given the shelf number 1209) and then in the Catalogue of 1481...all of which is more than a thousand years after its alleged composition...[I]t didn't come to light until 1475 when it was 'discovered' lying on a shelf in the Vatican Library.

But 'until the fifteenth century the library of the Vatican cannot be said to have been a substantial reality'.⁴⁰ It was formally established only in 1475 by the Papal Bull *Ad Decorum*. Before 1446 there were several papal collections in various places, including Rome and Avignon. It was Pope Nicholas V's Renaissance vision to bring various collections into one public library, and in the 1450s he donated volumes from his own private collection and those of his predecessors, and added Greek, Hebrew and Latin codices that had been carried to the West from the Imperial Library of Constantinople before it fell to the Turks in 1453.⁴¹ The next twenty years became an intense period of acquisition. In 1475, the year of its formal establishment and appointment of its first librarian, the library produced a first provisional listing of its holdings, which were at that time packed in cases awaiting completion of the building. A Greek Bible, bound in red morocco leather, is therein described as *Biblia. Ex membr. in rubeo*.

As for its being 'discovered on a shelf' in 1475, and that shelf being '1209', we note that the order for the bookcases and shelves was not placed until July 15, 1475, and the furniture was not complete, or the books set out and chained up until 1481, when the first accurate inventory was made. Shelf numbers (e.g. 1209) were not allocated until around 1620. In the 1481 inventory, a codex located *in primo banco bibliothecae*

⁴⁰ J.W Clark, *On the Vatican Library of Sixtus VI*, (1899). It was called the *Palatine Library* until 1587.

⁴¹ T.C. Skeat argued that Codex Vaticanus was one such volume that came from Constantinople, *The Codex Vaticanus in the 15th Century*, JTS 35 (1984).

graece is identified as *Biblia in tribus columnis ex membranis in rubeo*. As there was only one other fairly complete Greek Bible in that section, and that bound *in nigra*,⁴² it is a reasonable inference that the vellum Greek Bible *in rubeo* in the 1475 listing is the same as that in the 1481 listing. Only in some very trivial sense, therefore, can it be said that a volume was 'discovered lying on a shelf' in 1475 and 'came to light' publicly by its 'first mention' in the library's catalogue that year. No inference whatsoever can be drawn from the catalogue about the date of production of any particular holding, or the date of acquisition by any library that donated its holdings to the Palatine/Vatican library. Dr Cooper's assertion, therefore, that in 1475, Codex Vaticanus 'had strangely eluded the eye of every Vatican librarian for more than a thousand years past' (p.25) is as anachronistic as it is absurd.

Other anachronisms abound. Dr Cooper refers to Cardinal Angelo Mai in 1843 as 'the Jesuit Cardinal Mai', although Angelo Mai had left the Society of Jesus at the Pope's request and with the authorization of the superior general of the order in 1819 (nineteen years before he was made a cardinal), whereupon he was invited to Rome as chief keeper of the Vatican library.

Error more serious than anachronism (especially since it proves the very opposite to what is claimed) occurs on p.58 and p.64:

Without a doubt, this forged insertion [of a different ending to Mark 16, without vv.9-20] into the text of both Sinaiticus and Vaticanus was instigated by Cardinal Mai. He it was who was responsible for seeing the Vaticanus facsimile through the press in 1857.

[T]he verses Mark 16:9-20 were removed from Vaticanus by Cardinal Mai in 1857.

Here we have another 'without a doubt' statement, but what really cannot be doubted is that these would have been extraordinarily difficult undertakings for Cardinal Mai in 1857 since he had died three years previously.⁴³ The claims are unquestionably false on other counts as well. Mai's typographical facsimile, the preparatory work for which was completed in 1838 but only published posthumously, was widely criticized because it did not represent Codex Vaticanus as it stood. In particular, when Mai was working on the project in the 1820s and 1830s no known uncial codex anywhere in the Western world was wanting Mark 16:9-20 *except* Vaticanus, and Mai (very reasonably) regarded the unique omission in Vaticanus as a lacuna and *supplied* the missing text from the 10th century Greek

⁴² Bound in black. This appears to be the one mainly used as the basis for the Greek text in the Complutensian Polyglot.

⁴³ David W. Daniels makes an even more acute error (*op. cit.* p.11): not only does he have Cardinal Mai, who had been dead for 12 years, meeting Tischendorf in Rome, but he imputes the teaching of such nonsense to the universities and seminaries. The error is entirely his own.

miniscule *Vaticanus Palatinus* 220.⁴⁴ Buttmann's 1860 typographical edition of Vaticanus was based on Mai's work, and thus also contained the text of Mark 16:9-20 added by Mai. Buttmann's 1860 edition was the basis for the late-nineteenth century forgery Codex 2427, which is essentially the text of Vaticanus, but includes Mai's *addition* of Mark 16:9-20 and its own printer's errata. Thus Dr Cooper's explanation on p.64 why the forged Codex 2427 *includes* the ending of Mark's Gospel whereas Vaticanus omits it is an embarrassing falsehood, again seriously misleading the reader:

Now how did that come about? The answer is simplicity itself. The draft for MS 2427 was clearly copied verbatim out of Vaticanus before the verses Mark 16:9-20 were removed from Vaticanus by Cardinal Mai in 1857 – which proves beyond any shadow of a doubt that before 1857, Vaticanus originally included those twelve verses. The draft for MS 2427 was then written up in the late 19th century (post 1874) when the forgery was made.

This explanation exemplifies simplicity of a different kind, and is 'beyond a shadow of a doubt' false. Not only did Cardinal Mai *add* Mark 16:9-20 to his typographical facsimile of Vaticanus (the very opposite to that attributed to him by Dr Cooper), but the Codex itself had not contained those verses for centuries. How do we know? Because collations from Vaticanus were done over those centuries by and for many scholars, starting with Erasmus in compiling his text of the New Testament. Collations were supplied for him firstly by Bombasius, who 'with difficulty' located the codex in the library, and later by Sepulveda.⁴⁵ We know the names of the numerous scholars who have collated the codex since the early sixteenth century. Records survive of extensive collations back to the seventeenth century. Bartolucci, Librarian of the Vatican, collated it in 1669 against the Aldine Bible (Venice, 1518), the first edition of the complete Bible in Greek, comprising the Complutensian Polyglot LXX + Erasmus' NT; and Bartolucci's collation is extant.

The aforementioned Danish Lutheran scholar Andreas Birch clearly indicates that the ending of Mark 16 is wanting in Vaticanus, based on his examination of around

⁴⁴ Mai did, however, footnote that the passage was missing in the codex itself: '(*) codice vat. 1209, imittitus.'

⁴⁵ Dr Cooper himself admits (p.26) that 'Erasmus of Rotterdam had found the [Vaticanus] manuscript wanting all integrity as early as 1521'. Sepulveda's collation appears to have been something of a partisan defence of the Latin Vulgate, for he sent Erasmus 365 readings where Vaticanus supported the Vulgate *against* Erasmus' Greek New Testament. Nolan notes that 'With respects to manuscripts, it is indisputable that [Erasmus] was acquainted with every variety which is known to us; having distributed them into two principal classes, one which corresponds to the Complutensian edition, the other with the Vatican manuscript. And he has specified the positive grounds on which he received the one and rejected the other', *An Inquiry into the Integrity of the Greek Vulgate or Received Text of the New Testament* (London, 1815).

1781, for he records in his note at Mark 16:8 that *Ultima Evangelii Pericopa, a commate nono ad finem, omnino deest in praestantissimo et antiquissimo Codice Vaticano 1209.*⁴⁶

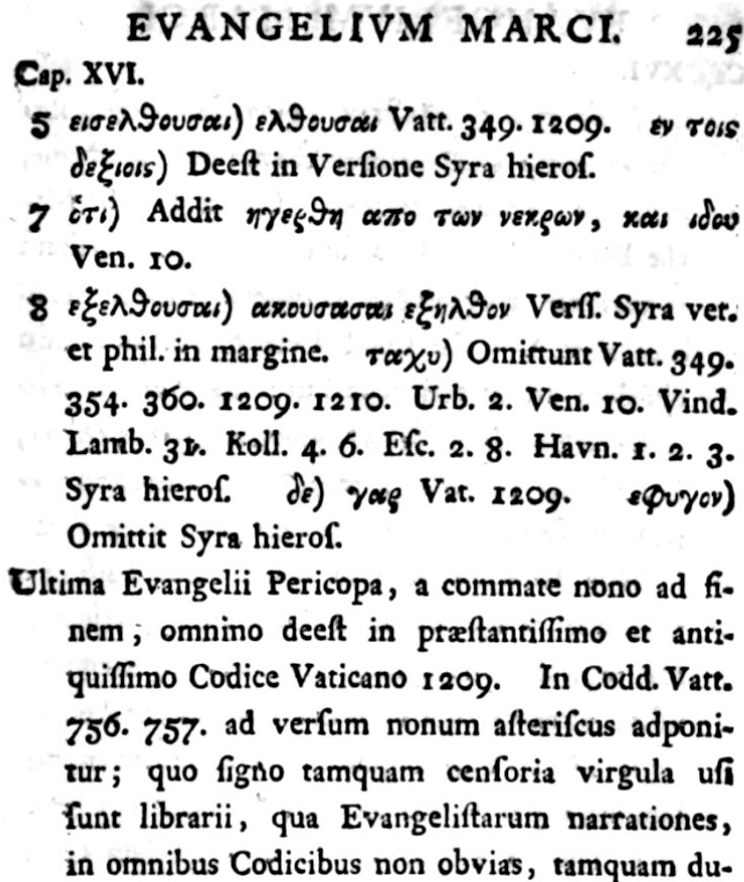


Figure 3 Andreas Birch's collation of Mark's Gospel based on his examination of the Codex in 1781 confirming verses 16:9 to the end missing in Codex Vaticanus 1209.

Additionally, in his Prolegomena he dedicates *thirteen pages* to detailed description of Codex Vaticanus,⁴⁷ of which there is a discussion across *three pages* concerning the missing end of Mark's Gospel,⁴⁸ clearly stating that *Ultima Evangelii Marci Pericope, a versu 9 Cap. XVI, ad finem usque Capitis, omnino deest in nostro, ita ut verbis εφοβουντο γαρ, subjiciatur hypographe κατα μαρκον.*⁴⁹

⁴⁶ *Variae Lectiones Ad Textum IV Evangeliorum, ex Codd. Mss. Bibliothecae Vaticanae* (1801), p.225: 'The final section of the Gospel, from the ninth division [i.e. from v.9] to the end, is entirely missing in the most illustrious and most ancient Codex Vaticanus 1209.'

⁴⁷ Ibid. pp. XV – XXVII

⁴⁸ Ibid. pp.XXIV to XXVI

⁴⁹ 'The final section of the Gospel of Mark, from verse 9 Chapter 16 to the very end of the chapter is entirely missing in our [codex], so that with the words 'for they were afraid' appears the subscript 'according to Mark' set underneath.'

XXIV PROLEGOMENA

dicibus, in quibus aperta correctionum ad vulgatam latinam versionem vestigia occurrunt, magnum in S. Crisi pondustribuendum esse; de his enim longe aliter judicamus.

Quamquam autem ex iis, quæ modo proposui, satis credam esse manifestum, quale pretium Codici Vaticano assignandum sit; tamen quo evidentius appareat, ex multis observationibus unam in exemplum adponam.

Ultima Evangelii Marci Pericope, a versu 9 Cap. XVI, ad finem usque Capituli, omnino deest in nostro, ita ut verbis εφοβουντο γαρ, subjiciatur hypographe κατα μαρκον. Quam omissionem hoc titulo præprimis notatu dignissimam existimamus, quod hic noster unicus sit in quo hæc desiderantur, licet in multis græcis codicibus ad versum nonum Scholion reperiatur, quo librarii referunt, se in multis antiquis Exemplaribus, hanc sectionem non invenisse. Id quoque testantur Ecclesiæ Scriptores, Gregorius Nyssenus, Severus Antiochenus et Victor; nemo tamen apertius et significantius Hieronymo in Epistola ad Hedibiam Tom. IV. Ed. Bened. p. 172.

Figure 4 Andreas Birch's note based on his examination of 1781 that Codex Vaticanus is wanting Mark 16:9 to the end, and that the column and Gospel is closed off after the words 'for they were afraid'.

During the codex's removal to Paris 1809-15 it was collated by Johann Hug. Hug's pupil Johann Scholz confirmed by reference to Bartolucci's collation in 1669 (a copy of which was in Paris) that Mark 16:9-20 was not present in Vaticanus at least as far back as 1669: nearly 200 years before Dr Cooper claims that Cardinal Mai removed it. Accordingly, Cardinal Mai had absolutely nothing to do with *removing* Mark 16:9-20 from Codex Vaticanus, but, ironically, everything to do with the *insertion* of Mark 16:9-20 into typographical facsimile editions of the same which appeared over more than a decade following his death, and thence its inclusion in the nineteenth century forgery Codex 2427.

Did Vaticanus and Sinaiticus have common scribes?

These facts are highly damaging to Dr Cooper's thesis, all the more so because he claims that the substitution of the ending of Mark in Codex Sinaiticus was 'carried out by the same scribe who removed the ending of Mark's Gospel from Codex Vaticanus and substituted it with a fake but identical ending to that in Sinaiticus', (p.106). As we saw above, Dr Cooper states that this 'forged insertion into the text of...Vaticanus was instigated by Cardinal Mai.'

There are several problems here. Firstly, although it is admitted by all that in *Sinaiticus* a certain scribe (Scribe D) made substitutes for three cancelled bifolia⁵⁰ (six leaves) produced by the scribe (Scribe A) who wrote (almost) all the New Testament, there is no evidence of any 'cancel leaves' and similar substitutions in Vaticanus. No informed person has ever claimed such a thing, and, as we have demonstrated above, Vaticanus has been recorded as wanting Mark 16:9-16 since 1669, centuries before Mai was born.⁵¹ By inspection of Vaticanus it is apparent that the whole of the New Testament is written by one scribe,⁵² who also wrote a great deal of the Old Testament.

Tischendorf *et al* were claiming that this scribe who wrote the Vaticanus New Testament was the same as he who wrote the *three* substitute bifolia in the Sinaiticus New Testament. Thus, if Dr Cooper's thesis be true that the ending of Mark's Gospel in *Vaticanus* was a 'forged insertion' by this scribe in the nineteenth century, then he had also to forge the rest of that New Testament, and 580 pages of the Old Testament in the nineteenth century since these are in the same hand. We have shown that the Codex Vaticanus did not contain the end of Mark's Gospel at least as far back as 1669, and we are aware of the distinctive readings in Vaticanus from collations going back to the sixteenth century, so Dr Cooper's thesis effectively amounts to claiming that the Vatican removed the codex that it had possessed since 1475 (if not before) and replaced it wholesale with an identical fake nineteenth century knock off with the very same text and lacunae. Now, what would be the point of going to that trouble?

As far as the common identity of the scribes is concerned (i.e. the scribe who wrote the New Testament in Vaticanus being the scribe who re-wrote and replaced three bifolia in Sinaiticus), Dr Cooper remarks (pp.61, 62) that 'Tischendorf noticed it,

⁵⁰ A bifolium is one sheet folded vertically to form two 'leaves', i.e. four 'pages'.

⁵¹ If Mai instigated the removal of Mark 16:9-20 from Vaticanus then he must have done so centuries before his birth; Dr Cooper's date for Mai's instigating the removal is three years after his death. The absurdity of all this should be apparent.

⁵² Such as is extant of the ancient original. The work of the original scribe beyond the middle of Hebrews is, however, not extant, though this comes close to the end in the arrangement of books. The remainder of Vaticanus, i.e. the remainder of Hebrews and Revelation, is supplied for completeness by a modern writer, but is of no value.

wrote about it...and he recorded the fact no less than three times’;⁵³ it was a ‘feature...that Tischendorf himself drew attention to no less than three times...’ (p.57). Dr Cooper quotes James Rendel Harris at length, writing in 1893: ‘It is generally held today that Tischendorf was justified in recognizing in the Sinaitic Codex the traces of the same hand as wrote the New Testament portion of the Codex Vaticanus’ (p.57). Dr Cooper himself adds that ‘our critics have been aware of this fact ever since Tischendorf himself pointed it out not once but three times’ (p.58).⁵⁴ We note, however, that Dr Cooper does not cite any critic in the last hundred years who *agrees* with Tischendorf’s judgment, as opposed to merely being *aware* of Tischendorf’s opinion. Dr Cooper even exclaims that ‘It is passing strange, therefore, that no modern critic has deigned to explain this startling fact’ (p.61). What is more startling is that Dr Cooper puts so much reliance on this opinion of Tischendorf, when he has elsewhere held him up to be a fraud, trying to pass off a forgery as genuine. Obviously, in this instance, Tischendorf’s opinion is considered useful for Dr Cooper’s thesis, and so is morphed into a ‘startling fact’.

Dr Cooper, as we saw, quotes Tischendorf, who made the early suggestion, and then Harris in 1893, who regarded the opinion as by then ‘generally held’. But we can even supply a quotation from the end of the nineteenth century by Sir Frederick Kenyon who refers to it as a ‘fact’:

One most noticeable case in which this manuscript [Sinaiticus] is found in agreement with [Vaticanus] is in the omission of the last twelve verses of St. Mark...With respect to the agreement of [Sinaiticus] and [Vaticanus] one curious fact should, however, be noticed; namely, that several pages of [Sinaiticus] are actually written by the scribe who wrote [Vaticanus]. This fact [is] admitted by competent scholars...

One scribe wrote the whole of the [Vaticanus NT] MS., and was also, as we have seen, employed on part of the Codex Sinaiticus...⁵⁵

But is it reasonable for Dr Cooper to state that ‘no modern critic has deigned to explain this startling fact’? It is not. Dr Cooper fails to inform the reader that no scholar for more than a century has considered this to be a ‘fact’ at all, and being not a ‘fact’, far less a ‘startling fact’, it requires no explanation whatsoever. Scholars revised their opinions after the turn of the century when excellent photographic facsimiles become available (Vaticanus 1904, Sinaiticus 1911), so there was no ‘startling fact’ to tell after 1911: Tischendorf’s opinion was universally discredited.

Kirsopp Lake, who produced the 1911 Sinaiticus New Testament photographic facsimile, was forthright in exposing Tischendorf’s error, having studied Codex

⁵³ Note that one scholar’s opinion has been morphed by Dr Cooper into a ‘fact’.

⁵⁴ Again, note that this opinion has been presented as a ‘fact’.

⁵⁵ F.G. Kenyon, *Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts*, 3rd edition (London, 1898), pp.127-8, 135.

Sinaiticus *first hand* in St Petersburg and compared it there with the 1904 photographic facsimile of Vaticanus:

Tischendorf's view that the body of the text of Codex Vaticanus was written by the scribe D of the Codex Sinaiticus is unfortunately indefensible [*author's footnote: This is, I may add, the opinion of every paleographer who has seen the proofs of the facsimile. I have found none who are inclined to agree with Tischendorf, or even to hesitate on the subject*]. A comparison of the two hands, which can easily be made...will convince any one of this fact...It is therefore necessary to abandon Tischendorf's view that part of the text of Codex Sinaiticus was written by the scribe of the text of Codex Vaticanus...It was [Scribe] D whom Tischendorf identified with the scribe of the New Testament in the Codex Vaticanus; a specimen of the latter is shown in the fourth column of Plate III, and it will probably be at once conceded by those who compare this with the third column, which is D, that there is no trace of justification for Tischendorf's theory. The wonder is that the fine eye [of Tischendorf]...could ever think for a moment that the script of D was identical with that of Codex Vaticanus.⁵⁶

Kenyon in 1939, in a fourth edition of his aforementioned work,⁵⁷ did the honourable thing and disavowed his former view that the identity of scribes was a 'fact', and modified the aforementioned sentence accordingly:

One scribe wrote the whole of the [Vaticanus] New Testament, but there is no sufficient ground for Tischendorf's assertion that he is identical with one of the scribes of the Sinaiticus.

In a separate 1937 work he had stated the matter even more clearly:

Tischendorf's assertion that one of the scribes of $\aleph$ is identical with the scribe who wrote the N.T. in B is universally discredited.⁵⁸

Thus the *actual* reason why scholars do not hold to an identity of scribes is because there is no truth whatsoever in such an opinion, for the evidence is solidly against it. Contrariwise, Dr Cooper's position amounts to an argument of conspiracy theory: all scholars actually believe that the scribe who wrote Codex Vaticanus and Scribe D of Codex Sinaiticus were one and the same, but they are all conspiring to suppress the truth and hide it from the public. It is only fair to quote Dr Cooper directly (p.57) so that the magnitude of this appeal to conspiracy theory is evident:

⁵⁶ Kirsopp Lake, *Codex Sinaiticus Petropolitanus, The New Testament, the Epistle of Barnabas and the Shepherd of Hermas*, (Oxford, 1911).

⁵⁷ 'When Sir Frederic Kenyon published his well-known book on the history of the Bible in 1895, it became at once a standard authority. But so much has been discovered about the Biblical texts that his fourth edition...is virtually a new book.' *The Spectator*, March 31, 1939, Page 48.

⁵⁸ F.G. Kenyon, *The Text of the Greek Bible*, (London, 1937).

Here, we are about to consider what is perhaps one of the greatest and most serious scandals in the depressingly long history of Vatican forgery. It is so blatant an attempt to deceive that we can only wonder firstly at the sheer audacity of the scheme along with the unabashed readiness with which the world has been deceived by it; and secondly, at the reluctance if not refusal of our more conservative scholars to even challenge or discuss the matter. It's not as if it has been hidden in a dark corner and unavailable for study. And it was, moreover, a feature of both Sinaiticus and Vaticanus that Tischendorf himself drew attention to no less than three times! Yet it is ignored on all fronts, liberal and conservative.

As we have shown above, Tischendorf's suggestion was not 'ignored on all fronts': it was painstakingly considered and comprehensively shown to be false, and its repudiation was not 'hidden in a dark corner and unavailable for study' but published. Tischendorf had pored over Codex Vaticanus and Codex Sinaiticus, having seen the one in Rome in 1843 for a total of six hours and the other being in his possession 1859-62. But until good photographic facsimiles became available it was not possible simultaneously to view sufficiently accurate images in order to do proper comparison. In the later nineteenth century, with one codex in St Petersburg and the other in Rome, other scholars faced the same problem, and many accepted Tischendorf's opinion merely on his authority, since he was one of the very few eyewitnesses to both.⁵⁹ But once one could study excellent photographic images, or better still examine one of the originals alongside a good photographic facsimile of the other, it became crystal clear that Tischendorf had deceived himself, and thereby all those who had relied on his authority.

Yet Dr Cooper shows images of Sinaiticus and Vaticanus pages side by side (pp.60-1) with the remark 'It is very plain indeed that the same scribe wrote out both pages...and we can see it here with our own eyes.' Unfortunately, Dr Cooper's eyesight and/or judgment cannot be trusted here. Were the reader to compare the documents,⁶⁰ he would find that all palaeographers who have had access to photographic images since Kirsopp Lake (who showed enlarged images of both codices for comparison in 1911) are fully justified in their assessment, and accordingly Tischendorf was mistaken. It is not a little interesting, therefore, that Dr Cooper promotes the 'indefensible' and 'universally discredited' opinion of Tischendorf and other nineteenth century palaeographers (whom he elsewhere disparages) for which there remains 'no trace of justification'.⁶¹

⁵⁹ Tregelles was another.

⁶⁰ The reader would need a magnifying glass to view the characters in Dr Cooper's book. Presumably, therefore, Dr Cooper expects his readers to take his word for it.

⁶¹ Although he has not seen it reported elsewhere, the present reviewer considers that the clearest indicator of different scribes is on the formation of the letter M. Scribe D in Sinaiticus forms this letter with four strokes (the motion of the pen stops three times, though not lifted). The Vaticanus scribe forms the letter with three strokes (the motion of the pen stops twice), so that there is a radius at the

Failing to disclose to his readers that Tischendorf's view has been universally discredited for over a century, Dr Cooper avers that his indefensible opinion is 'damning enough proof on its own' to sustain his thesis (p.106), since a nineteenth century hand in Codex Vaticanus would, if the very same hand, infer a nineteenth century hand in Codex Sinaiticus. And yet his assertion of a common scribe in Mark 16 completely undermines his thesis. For since we know from collations (a fact, not a mere opinion) that Mark 16:9-20 has not been in Vaticanus since 1669 (at the latest), which condition has persisted and been continually witnessed in collations to the present day, a common scribe's hand in the substituted ending of Mark in Sinaiticus would require the origin of Sinaiticus to be no later than the seventeenth century. Indeed, if one wishes to establish a *nineteenth* century dating for the production of Sinaiticus (Dr Cooper's thesis), the very last thing one would want to find or assert would be a common hand in Vaticanus.

centre, there being a change of direction while the pen is in motion. This is elementary graphology. There are many other clear differences, such that Tischendorf was gravely mistaken and misled a whole generation of scholars who relied on him. We encourage readers of Cooper's book to take their magnifying glasses and compare the formation of the letter M in both codices. They will see that it is very plain that they are *not* the work of the same scribe. This observation may also lend some strength to the argument that the manuscript is later than mid-fourth century. We note that Scribe D is a far more competent than scribe than A, and both are better than B. Scribe D, who makes far fewer mistakes in copying has the more 'canonical' Biblical majuscule script: he has learned not only to spell but how to form his letters perfectly, including the form of *mu*. Orsini and Clarysse note among 'The constituent elements of this canon' the formation '*mu* in four strokes'. Scribe D observes this, but Scribes A and B do not – at least, not consistently. Other scripts around from earlier to later than the fourth century had the middle stroke of the *mu* turned into a single curve. However, it should be investigated whether Scribe A, when required to use the Biblical majuscule style, incorporated elements of a later 'decline' from canonical form: 'The fourth century is an important moment in the history of this script...[F]rom the end of this century a long decline sets in, which continues until the ninth-tenth centuries. The graphic rules of the start of the period gradually become less rigidly observed.' *Early New Testament Manuscripts and Their Dates: A Critique of Theological Palaeography*, in *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovaniensis* 88/4 (2012), pp.451-2.

CODEX SINAITICUS AT ST CATHERINE'S

Tischendorf's 1844 trip to St Catherine's Monastery

On his first trip to St Catherine's monastery in Sinai in 1844, Tischendorf took away 43 leaves from an uncial parchment manuscript of the Scriptures in Greek,⁶² and named them 'Codex Friderico-Augustanus' in honour of his patron King Frederick-Augustus II of Saxony. These have ever since been retained in Leipzig and form part of what is now known as Codex Sinaiticus. Tischendorf published a handsome lithographed facsimile of the document in 1846. It was not until 1855, however, that Tischendorf admitted publicly that the leaves were part of a larger collection that he had seen on one of his trips, 'in the vicinity of Egypt', without specifying where. His much later account of his discovery, which appeared in 1860, is a tale that appears to have developed somewhat apart from the truth, and continued to be embellished in the telling throughout the following decade.

Tischendorf's unlikely personal account of his first visit to Sinai is often repeated — that in St Catherine's monastery he came across leaves of a manuscript in a basket of materials ready to be burned and so rescued them from destruction — suggesting that the codex was considered of no value, a worthless manuscript merely fit for fuel.⁶³ Tischendorf tried out this romantic story with the Emperor and Empress of Russia in November 1859, and noticed that it excited shock and amazement.⁶⁴ He repeated the story in a letter to the Archbishop of Sinai in April 1860,⁶⁵ and incorporated it in published works in Latin that same year.⁶⁶ It reached a more embellished form in

⁶² Containing parts of 1 Chronicles, 2 Esdras [=Ezra and Nehemiah], Jeremiah, Lamentations, and Esther.

⁶³ In private correspondence to his brother Julius on June 15, 1844, he merely states that as a result of his researches at St Catherine's 'I came into possession of' (*'ich bin in den Besitz gelangt von'*) the 43 leaves, the propriety of which is hardly convincing. There is not the slightest mention of discovering them or finding them in a waste basket, or saving them from the fire.

⁶⁴ Letter to his wife Angelika from St Petersburg, November 20, 1859.

⁶⁵ Letter to Angelika, April 18, 1860, from St Petersburg. In Tischendorf's account to Cyril the Archbishop of Sinai he states that he found the manuscript in a basket in the library in 1844. It is more than a little surprising that the Archbishop had to wait until 1860 to hear the account of the discovery in his own monastery, sixteen years after the event itself.

⁶⁶ Tischendorf, *Notitia editionis Codicis Biblicorum Sinaitici* (Leipzig, 1860). Tregelles in a review of the latter work in 1861 gives the English reader the first taste of what is to become the 'canonical' Tischendorf account: the manuscript 'was found (he states) in a basket with other fragments, destined for the fire by the monks.' Tregelles sagaciously distanced himself a little by including the parenthetical 'he states', and with good reason: he had shown Tischendorf letters in 1850 detailing examination of the Codex Sinaiticus in 1845 by the Egyptologist and archaeologist Major Charles Kerr Macdonald, and Tischendorf had deceived Tregelles by *positively* denying its existence, i.e. Tischendorf claimed certain knowledge that the Codex was not at St Catherine's (which in turn implies that Macdonald was fabricating), rather than he simply did not know whether it was there or not. When in 1862 Tregelles saw the manuscript for himself and compared it with Macdonald's and Uspensky's accounts, he knew for certain that Macdonald's and Uspensky's descriptions from 1845

1862, when such a story would become very useful, and was disseminated in German, French, and English.⁶⁷ However, the story is best considered as containing unreliable disinformation: few scholars believe it entirely, and it has the support of no witnesses, but the continual denial of the monks there that such ever was the case. Thankfully the tale is not actively promoted by the museums holding parts of the manuscript.

In fact, the major part of the Codex Sinaiticus, and the other most precious manuscripts at the monastery such as the Golden Evangelistarium, were deliberately not made available to Tischendorf either in 1844 or on his second visit in 1853.⁶⁸ The most precious manuscripts, of which Codex Sinaiticus was the principal, were not kept in the general library (which general visitors could see), or in the rare manuscript library (to which scholars such as Tischendorf with suitable references could see), but in the locked rooms of the superiors of the monastery, specifically under the care of the sacristan, the *skeuophylax*. Tischendorf himself records that he had never requested access to those private rooms.⁶⁹ He would only much later (in 1859) come to understand that the library was in three parts, only two of which he had accessed, whereas more trusted visitors since 1844 had been favoured to see the

were correct, and that Tischendorf had misled him for 13 years. It was these letters that mentioned the destruction of old manuscripts by fire, and Tischendorf later used that concept in a different sense to construct his account of the discovery with the romantic element of being saved from certain destruction, as well as justification for his rather dubious removal of the 43 leaves.

Another account (arguably earlier than the *Notitia*) is found in *Vetus Testamentum Graece Iuxta LXX Interpretes*, 3rd edition (Leipzig, 1860), which mentions recovery from the basket of waste papers, but does not include mention of the fire.

⁶⁷ The German original from which the 'canonical' versions were taken in English and French translation is Tischendorf's *Aus Dem Heilige Lande* (Leipzig 1862), p.108, which reads 'In der Mitte der Bibliothek, deren Bücher und Handschriften ringsum auf Regalen aufgestellt waren, stand ein Korb mit Bestell von verschiedenen alten theilweise verdorbenen handschriften, dergleichen schon zwei Körbe voll als unbrauchbar ins Feuer geworfen worden waren. In diesem Korb fand ich zur grössten Ueberraschung mehrere Fragmente von einer griechischen Bibelhandschrift auf Pergament, in der ich sogleich eine der ältesten, die es gibt, erkennen musste. Es gelang leicht die Abtretung eines Theils derselben zu veranlassen.' The following year the account appears as follows in *Waffen der Finsternis wider die Sinaibibel* (Leipzig, 1863): 'Im Mai 1844 stand in der Sinaibibliothek, deren Handschriften und Bücher auf Regalen aufgestellt waren, auch ein großer Korb mit weggeworfenen Pergamenten, dergleichen, wie mir der Bibliothekar bemerkte, als er mich zur Untersuchung schreiten sah, schon 2 Körbe voll ins Feuer geworfen worden waren. Aus diesem Korb nun zog ich zu meinem höchsten Erstaunen verschiedene alttestamentliche Reste der Sinaibibel hervor. Nachdem mir der geringere Theil derselben ohne Schwierigkeit bei anscheinender Werthlosigkeit abgetreten worden war, bemühte ich mich umsonst um die übrigen Fragmente.'

The present reviewer regards it as an element of a disinformation campaign, as part of the Russian government's political manoeuvrings at the time. As other visitors to St Catherine's in the nineteenth century noted, baskets were used to hold disbound sections of manuscripts.

⁶⁸ He only managed to see these in 1859, visiting under the aegis of the Russian government, and then not through any discovery of his own.

⁶⁹ In respect of Codex Sinaiticus, for example, in 1859 he was specifically invited into the room of the *oikonomos* (steward), who (Tischendorf admits) 'laid it before me'.

monastery's precious manuscripts, including Codex Sinaiticus, among them Major Charles Kerr Macdonald and Porphyrius Uspensky. Tischendorf adopted the vain attitude that no one could see what he hadn't seen, and remained incredulous even when provided with evidence that others had seen what he had not. Samuel P. Tregelles even took letters from Major Macdonald with his descriptions of Codex Sinaiticus to show Tischendorf in Leipzig in 1850, yet Tischendorf remained in denial. A report in *The Edinburgh Review* of July 1859 recorded it well enough:

Professor Tischendorf's visit to the library of the monastery of Mount Sinai, several years ago, was productive of but little result; and he heard somewhat incredulously the report brought by Major Macdonald that the special treasures of that library had not been shown him [i.e. Tischendorf].⁷⁰

Indeed they had not been shown him. The letter of introduction that Tischendorf carried in 1844 from the abbot (then resident in Cairo) had instructed the monks to be helpful towards Tischendorf, but to be wary of him with regard to manuscripts. Because such instructions had been transmitted, Tischendorf described the abbot as a 'perfidious Greek'.⁷¹ The monks were evasive about the whereabouts of their finest volumes because of previous thefts by visitors. Tischendorf's assessment of those who had the special responsibility to look after their manuscript treasures is frankly shocking:

I was most anxious to see another remarkable MS. of Sinai...But all my exertions, both conciliatory and imperative, were in vain...This was a genuine instance upon all sides of the *Graeca fides*...I taxed the brotherhood with falsehood...The prior is a native of Crete; St. Paul's notorious character of the Cretes (the Cretes are always liars) he seems to verify, even in the present day...I now believe that the manuscript...has really been sold to the English. As it would be a disgrace to the monastery...they dare not admit it.⁷²

His belief was entirely misplaced – the monastery had no intention whatsoever of selling their most precious manuscripts.⁷³

⁷⁰ *The Edinburgh Review*, Vol. 110, July 1859, p.189.

⁷¹ Letter to his brother Julius from Cairo, June 15, 1844.

⁷² Tischendorf, *Travels in the East* (London, 1847), p.107.

⁷³ There is a certain amount of irony in that Tischendorf, who was unable to obtain any of the leaves of Codex Sinaiticus for gold, though he offered several times high prices, recounts his relief that the monks reassured him that they would not sell their precious manuscripts for 'English gold'. The irony is that the British Major Charles Kerr Macdonald, who saw the Codex in 1845, is one of the very few who did manage to purchase codices from St Catherine's at the time that Tischendorf's offers of gold via his agent in Egypt, Franz Ignaz Pruner ('Pruner Bey'), were being rebuffed.



Figure 5 Porphyrius Uspensky c.1880, Russian scholar and bishop

The celebrated Russian archimandrite and scholar Konstantin Alexandrovitch Uspensky (1804-85),⁷⁴ who took the name Porphyrius at ordination, records:⁷⁵

⁷⁴ Uspensky is described by the National Library of Russia thus: 'Porphyrius (Uspensky)...was an outstanding Russian scholar of Oriental, Byzantine and Slavic history, Doctor of Hellenic philology, an archaeologist, ethnographer, specialist in the study of early texts, textual critic, palaeographer, historian, art historian, theologian, and author of many scientific works...In Petersburg he was acclaimed as a scholar of world renown. Both the Government and the Most Holy Synod turned to him for advice as an expert on Christian antiquities.' We note in passing that an active channel of communication between Uspensky and the Russian government is admitted. We shall see more of this later, and its significance will become clear.

⁷⁵ Also seen after Uspensky in 1845 by the British officer Major Charles Kerr Macdonald, who reported his sighting to B.W. Newton some years later in 1849, who passed the relevant letters to Samuel P. Tregelles. In 1850 in Leipzig, Tregelles showed Tischendorf these letters of Macdonald's description of the document, but Tischendorf denied that there was any such codex at Mt Sinai. Tregelles wrote to Newton from Leipzig on June 20, 1862, where he was examining the Codex, and confirmed, 'There can be no reasonable doubt that this is the same M.S. that Major Macdonald saw, but of the nonexistence of which Tischendorf assured me in the strongest manner both in writing & when I was here in 1850.' (emphasis original). Writing to Robert Scott on July 15, 1864, Tregelles stated, 'In 1850 when I showed Tischendorf the account which Major Macdonald had given (in private letters) of the ancient MS of the m[ona]stery of Mount Sinai written in many columns, he assured me that no such MS of the New Test[ament] was there. But Major M[acdonald] as well as the Russian Porphyrius certainly saw it more than fifteen years ago.' One thing that Tischendorf gleaned from Macdonald's letters was his description of the destruction of old manuscripts by fire, which Tischendorf modified into a concept that became an important element of his rather legendary account of saving the Codex from imminent destruction by fire in 1844, which story he began to propagate in 1859 when the location of the find was known.

The Greek monks under various pretexts did not show him the precious manuscripts stored in the secret places of their holy abodes. These monks, long frightened by the sublime Porte's [i.e. Ottoman government] empowering European travellers to enter the sacristies and book depositories of Orthodox monasteries, and offended by the unfavourable reviews about them in travel descriptions, rightly shied away from fulfilling Tischendorf's requests, who did not and does not have the main attractive power, that is, confession of the Orthodox faith.⁷⁶

Uspensky, being a respected Russian Orthodox archimandrite (he was to establish and lead the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in Jerusalem from 1847) had no such restrictions placed upon him, and after his examination of Codex Sinaiticus in 1845, he issued his own advice concerning it and the other most precious manuscripts, as recorded in his diary:

I, returning [the Codex Sinaiticus] to Father Vitaly, along with other manuscripts, zealously asked him to keep it in the superiors' rooms and to be careful about showing them to travellers.⁷⁷

On this 1845 visit there were four most precious manuscripts (including Codex Sinaiticus), which were specially guarded by the superiors, to which in 1850 Uspensky requested they add two more.⁷⁸

These reinforced restrictions prevented Tischendorf from seeing any of the precious manuscripts on his second visit in 1853. Dr Cooper, however, states (p.78) that Tischendorf's failure to secure the remainder of the Codex in 1853 was 'because he hadn't returned as promised the 43 leaves that he had 'borrowed'' on his 1844 visit, when 'the monks were only persuaded to let Tischendorf take them away because he had falsely promised to return them' (p.78). Dr Cooper gives no reference for this

⁷⁶ P.V. Bezobrazov, *Материалы для биографии епископа Порфирия Успенского* (St Petersburg, 1910), Vol. II.

⁷⁷ Uspensky, *Книга бытия моего. Дневники и автобиографические записки* (St Petersburg, 1894-1902). Vol IV, June-July 1850.

⁷⁸ In 1845 Uspensky had identified the four most precious manuscripts in the monastery, the *principal* one being Codex Sinaiticus. These were kept locked in the rooms of the superiors, see *Первое путешествие в Синайский Монастырь в 1845 году Архимандрита Порфирия Успенского* (St Petersburg, 1856). On Uspensky's 1850 trip **he requested two more to be locked away** with the 'precious manuscripts': '[A] Glagolitic Psalter and a very old Georgian Psalter. I gave both of these books to the sacristan with a zealous request that he keep them together with the precious manuscripts in the superiors' rooms and be careful about showing them to travellers.' *Второе путешествие архимандрита Порфирия Успенского в Синайский монастырь в 1850 году* (St Petersburg, 1856). Also see Uspensky, *Замечательные рукописи в библиотеках Синайского монастыря и в архиепископских кельях там* ['Wonderful manuscripts in the libraries of the Sinai monastery and in the Archbishop's cells there'], (Uspensky collection at the Imperial Academy of Sciences, № 136.1), especially pp. 3-22, which describe 'The manuscript of the Old and New Testament, kept in the sacristy of the Sinai monastery', i.e. Codex Sinaiticus.

invention and imputation of bad faith, neither could he as there is not the slightest suggestion in any narrative or record that leaves removed by Tischendorf in 1844 were on loan, and Uspensky supplies us with the plausible reason why they were withheld.

Vitalius was still the sacristan on Tischendorf's third visit in 1859, and it was he who stubbornly resisted Tischendorf removing the Codex Sinaiticus from the monastery⁷⁹ – Tischendorf had to travel to Cairo to see Vitalius' superior to overrule him, and only then was the Codex transported to the monastery's *metochion* in Cairo for copying over a number of months. *The Homilist* was in this instance more historically accurate than those accounts that credit Tischendorf with 'discovering' the Codex, which the monks had previously deliberately hidden from him:

[I]n 1859 he was there again; and being now under the protection of the Emperor of Russia, the monks showed him and permitted him to copy the whole.⁸⁰

Porphyrius Uspensky's examinations of the Codex in 1845 and 1850

It is seldom appreciated that all 347 leaves of the Codex that the *oikonomos* of the monastery had in his room and brought to Tischendorf's attention in 1859, which Tischendorf eventually removed to St Petersburg and named Codex Sinaiticus Petropolitanus, were thoroughly examined in 1845 and 1850 by Uspensky.

Uspensky's detailed examination in 1845 was of what remained of the codex following Tischendorf's removal of 43 of its leaves the previous year. He saw the 74 leaves that Tischendorf had seen but was unable to remove,⁸¹ plus 273 leaves that Tischendorf would not be permitted to see until 1859, comprising the Minor Prophets, the Psalms and Wisdom literature, the whole of the New Testament, the Epistle of Barnabas and The Shepherd of Hermas. On this 1845 visit Uspensky also found a fragment from the Book of Genesis from the Codex, and so inferred that the Codex was at one time a complete Bible. On this first examination Uspensky was well aware that the New Testament differed markedly from the Received Text, but he initially considered that it was nothing more sinister than a poor job of copying from poor exemplars.

Uspensky visited again in 1850 and from June to August catalogued the manuscripts at St Catherine's,⁸² during which time he sought out the Codex Sinaiticus manuscript

⁷⁹ Letter to Angelika from Cairo, February 15, 1849.

⁸⁰ *The Homilist* (London, 1864), Vol. III, p.39.

⁸¹ The figure of 86 leaves that is universally reported as having been seen but not taken by Tischendorf in 1845 is incorrect.

⁸² Uspensky's 452-page catalogue of the manuscripts in St Catherine's and their Juvanie *metochion* in Cairo is extant (Imperial Academy of Sciences, reference VIB19). Simonides claimed to have made such a catalogue on a (fictitious) trip to St Catherine's in 1844, but Uspensky would not have needed

and continued his study of it for 'a long time'.⁸³ On his second review of the Codex, Uspensky became very concerned about what he suspected were its heterodox origins, seeing distinct aspects of Arianism and Apollinarianism in it, and perceiving that many important differences from the Received Text were not mere human errors. He records in his diary in 1850:

After such a second review of this manuscript, my first opinion of her has changed, so that it seemed to me to be a production that appeared not in the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church, but outside of her...The Sinai Bible worried me. And it is remarkable as an example of the corruption of Holy Scripture, especially the New Testament.⁸⁴

It was during this second visit that, as recorded in his diary,⁸⁵ Uspensky carefully produced artwork of portions of Codex Sinaiticus from the Old and New Testament, later published as colour plates in 1857. Uspensky's examinations of the Codex, some details of which were published in 1856,⁸⁶ followed by his colour plates in 1857,

to do all this work if Simonides had done it a few years earlier. No one has ever seen a catalogue by Simonides. This is more evidence that Simonides was spinning a yarn.

⁸³ 'The remaining days of July [1850] have been on book work. I studied the ancient Greek manuscript on thin white parchment leaves containing part of the Old Testament and the entire New Testament with the epistle of the apostle Barnabas and the book of Hermas', *Второе путешествие архимандрита Порфирия Успенского в Синайский монастырь в 1850 году* (St Petersburg, 1856). 'This is part of the books of the Old Testament and the whole New Testament with the epistle of Barnabas and the book of Hermas under the name Ποιμήν i.e. the Shepherd. I saw this manuscript in 1845, but I did not then consider it in detail because of other compulsory studies at Sinai, but now I kept it for a long time while I was at the monastery of St Catherine and described its composition, supplemented my previous excerpts from it, and carefully studied the text contained in it, especially the New Testament.' *Книга бытия моего. Дневники и автобиографические записки* (St Petersburg, 1894-1902). Vol IV, diary for June-July 1850.

⁸⁴Uspensky, *Книга бытия моего. Дневники и автобиографические записки* (St Petersburg, 1894-1902). Vol IV, June-July 1850.

⁸⁵ 'During the [1850] trip to Sinai I made...two pictures from the oldest manuscript containing the Old Testament incomplete and the New Testament complete.' *Книга бытия моего. Дневники и автобиографические записки* (St Petersburg, 1894-1902). Vol IV, June-July 1850.

⁸⁶ A great deal was never published, but is extant. For example, see Uspensky's 132pp manuscript *Замечательные рукописи в библиотеках Синайского монастыря и в архиепископских кельях там* ['Wonderful manuscripts in the libraries of the Sinai monastery and in the Archbishop's cells there'] in the Uspensky collection at the Imperial Academy of Sciences, № 136.1. Pages 3-22 are dedicated to Codex Sinaiticus. That Uspensky took vast notes of readings and collations on his 1845 and 1850 visits is also evident from his published detailed treatment of it, setting out the grounds for its being a production of heterodoxy, in his *Мнение о Синайской рукописи, содержащей в себе Ветхий Завет неполный и весь Новый Завет с посланием Св. Апостола Варнавы и книгою Ермы*, (St Petersburg, 1862), which was published before Tischendorf's facsimile edition was available for consultation. One might wonder why Uspensky's account of his 1845 visit, which has quite a few pages on Codex Sinaiticus, took a decade to get to press. One of the reasons was his onerous workload and travelling. Another was the heavy hand of the censor. The original draft of Uspensky's account of his 1845 visit and examination of Codex Sinaiticus is extant, and reveals plenty of red ink of the censor on it.

are of the greatest importance. When Uspensky examined the manuscript in 1845 his dating of it was fifth century. He continued to describe it as fifth century in the colour plates of it published in 1857. He finally gave its date a range of between fifth to seventh century. Uspensky, who was an expert on ancient parchment manuscripts, saw nothing inconsistent about such an age and the condition of the parchment and inks, having examined parts of the Codex during the 1840s, 1850s and 1860s.

Uspensky is an important witness *against* Dr Cooper's thesis, since he made detailed examination in 1845 of exactly what Tischendorf removed in 1859. Moreover, Uspensky wrote a great deal about Codex Sinaiticus in the 1860s after its arrival in St Petersburg,⁸⁷ but there is no hint that the Codex had undergone any significant change over the 20 years that he had been familiar with it.

Tischendorf's 1859 visit to St Catherine's monastery

Porphyrius Uspensky's detailed knowledge of the codex in 1845, together with knowledge of the leaves that Tischendorf removed in 1844 (published in facsimile in 1846) led directly to the deduction in Russia that Tischendorf's 43 leaves in Leipzig belonged to the same codex that Uspensky had examined.⁸⁸ Surely this, and Uspensky's early dating of it, and his bringing to Russia a fragment of the Pentateuch from the Codex in 1845, were the background and motive behind the Russian government's determination to bring the remainder of the manuscript to the Russian Empire from out of the Ottoman Empire. Dr Cooper slips up badly here, wondering how the Russians could have known about the Codex at St Catherine's prior to Tischendorf's 1859 visit (pp.35, 77):

Tischendorf claimed that in 1859 he was sent to Sinai to search for such a manuscript by Tsar Nicholas I. How did it become known to the Tsar, and through whom, that such a manuscript was now available in such a remote and inaccessible part of the world?

Quite how the Tsar became blessed with this knowledge we do not know...We may wonder at the strange importance that Codex Sinaiticus had taken on for a Russian

(Donated to the Imperial Academy of Sciences in Uspensky's will). It was not passed by the censor for publication until 1856, as also was the account of his 1850 visit.

⁸⁷ Uspensky arrived in St Petersburg in 1861 and was there for some years.

⁸⁸ This was inferred 'at once' in Great Britain on far less evidence than the Russians had, and without knowledge of the specific origin of either the Leipzig leaves (Codex Friderico-Augustanus) or the leaves newly reported by Tischendorf in the spring of 1859: 'Those who have seen the 'Codex Friderico-Augustanus'...will at once see that this newly announced MS. so thoroughly coincides with that document, that...we must suppose that Professor Tischendorf has obtained another and most important portion of the 'Codex Friderico-Augustanus' itself...We believe that no statement has been published as to where this MS. was obtained.' *The Edinburgh Review*, Vol. 110, July 1859, p.190.

Tsar who'd never even seen or heard of it before. And who, I wonder, told him of its existence?

When Dr Cooper says 'we do not know', the reader could be forgiven for believing that the matter has never been public knowledge, and therefore is supportive of the conspiracy theory. Yet English scholars Tregelles and Scrivener reported Uspensky's 1856 publication in their day:

[I]n 1846 [sic], the Russian Archimandrite Porphyrius appears to have seen the same MS, and to have observed especially the New Testament portion of it, and to have noted the character of the text, though the published account of this did not appear till 1856.⁸⁹

Porphyrius [Uspensky] examined it, observed that the New Testament formed part of it, and published a tolerable account⁹⁰ of its contents and the character of its text at St Petersburg in 1856...Porphyrius brought with him from Sinai some fragments of the Codex Sinaiticus itself,⁹¹ containing portions of Genesis and of Numbers.⁹²

That the earlier portion of the Old Testament was once contained in this manuscript appears as well from the small fragment possessed by Porphyrius.⁹³

To write a book about the provenance of Codex Sinaiticus and be unaware of such basic information reported in the literature since 1860 by two of the most well-known English scholars is staggering. The Russian authorities knew about the Codex in the 1840s, and its existence, its contents and its exact location within the monastery became *public knowledge* in 1856,⁹⁴ with excellent colour images publicly available in 1857—yet Dr Cooper still wonders how the Tsar knew about it in 1859.

⁸⁹ S. P. Tregelles, *Additions to the fourth volume of the Introduction to the Holy Scriptures by the Rev. Thomas. H. Horne* [1860]. Uspensky's descriptions of the Codex examined during his 1845 and 1850 visits and published in 1856 were in the British Museum some months before Tischendorf would be shown copies by Prince Lobanov in Constantinople, and before Tischendorf removed the Codex from St Catherine's *metochion* in Cairo.

⁹⁰ As with Tischendorf, a grudging acknowledgement is evident. Uspensky's account of the Codex ran to 14 pages in the account of his 1845 visit, and dealt with component parts, dating, provenance, and the activities of correctors, giving several examples of additions, omissions, and variant readings.

⁹¹ Strictly, the leaf from Numbers came from the monastery's *metochion* [= associated compound] in Jouvania, Cairo. Uspensky removed it in 1861.

⁹² Scrivener, *A Full Collation of the Sinaitic MS. with the Received Text of the New Testament* (1864). The relevant quotation here from Scrivener is repeated in J.K. Elliott's work *Codex Sinaiticus and the Simonides Affair*, p.51, which Dr Cooper claims to have read (p.28 etc). On the same page in Elliott is a citation from *The Clerical Journal* of September 11, 1862 concerning the 'Simonides Affair' which states in the context of St Catherine's monastery: 'Again, in 1845 or 1846, a Russian archimandrite, named Porphyrius, seems unquestionably to have stumbled upon the Sinai MS'. In point of fact he did not 'stumble upon' it, it was part of his work in cataloguing the treasures of the monastery, and it was its greatest treasure and guarded accordingly. However, the important point is that the Russians knew about it in 1845.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p.xxxii.

⁹⁴ Initially in Russia in 1856, but copies were available in the British museum in 1859.

Russia's present difficulty was that it was not in any position to extract and transfer the Codex to Russia: she had been at war with the Ottoman Empire until 1856 and the outcome of the Crimean War was not settled until the Treaty of Paris in 1858.

Looking back over those times Uspensky writes:

At the end of 1854, I arrived in Petersburg and in 1856 published in the description of my first trip to Sinai a brief report and a statement about the Sinai text of the Bible that I discovered; lithographic images from it were placed in my picturesque edition of Egypt and Sinai [published 1857], postponing for a time the publication of my second judgment concerning this text [published 1862]. I do not know whether Tischendorf heard a rumour about these books of mine, and whether our former minister Norov told him about them during his journey through Germany, but this professor of theology and palaeography decided to go to Sinai for the third time in order to see the manuscript that was discovered and printed by me, and to obtain this goal successfully, he asked for our [Russian] funding and our [Russian] letters of introduction, which followed him to the East.⁹⁵

In 1856, Tischendorf says:⁹⁶

Several motives...led me, in the autumn of 1856, to submit to the Russian Government a plan of a journey for making systematic researches in the East.

Indeed, as Uspensky relates, Tischendorf presented a memorandum to the Russian ambassador to Saxony in Dresden for the attention of A. Norov, Russian Minister of Education, in which he requested permission from the Patriarch of Constantinople and the Archbishop of Sinai to obtain from their monasteries those manuscripts, and parts of them, that were no longer used for worship, or had special ornamental use, or were documents for the establishment of any rights. By this means Tischendorf undertook to bring important manuscripts to Russia.

At that time Tischendorf believed that knowledge of where the Codex was located was a secret that rested entirely with him. He was greatly mistaken: the Russian authorities knew its whereabouts more precisely, and knew vastly more about the Codex than Tischendorf himself, but they were not going to let him know that until the Codex was well away from Mount Sinai. They consulted Uspensky for his advice about the opportunity of engaging Tischendorf, and Uspensky wrote to the Chief Procurator of the Most Holy Synod, Count A.P. Tolstoy, on March 1, 1858, as he records in his diary:

⁹⁵ Uspensky, *Мнение о Синайской рукописи, содержащей в себе Ветхий Завет неполный и весь Новый Завет с посланием Св. Апостола Варнавы и книгу Ермы*, (St Petersburg, 1862).

⁹⁶ Originally in *Wann wurden unsere Evangelien verfasst?* (Leipzig, 1865).

At the request of the Synodal Chief Procurator Tolstoy, in my seventh letter to him I set out my opinion concerning sending the professor of the University of Leipzig, Constantine Tischendorf, to the East on behalf of our government, for the search and acquisition for us of ancient manuscripts there.⁹⁷

In the letter to Tolstoy (March 1, 1858), Uspensky is negative towards the engagement of Tischendorf, and instead recommends the sending of three Russian scholars, with written permissions of the Patriarchs of Constantinople, Alexandria and Jerusalem, and the Archbishop of Sinai, with strong guarantees concerning the safe return of any materials removed. He asks,

Is it not fairer to equip these chosen [scholars] with the written permission of the mentioned hierarchs to take from the monasteries the most important manuscripts (for example, the fifth century Sinaitic text of the Septuagint) not permanently, but for a limited period for the reproduction of those ancient texts, and to take them under the guarantee of our mission to Constantinople and the local consuls with the promise to return them to their places, and not without recompence?⁹⁸

However, the Russian authorities had rather more in mind than temporarily borrowing the Codex for academic use. In 1858 Tischendorf forced the issue, disclosing that if the Russians would not sponsor him then he already had an offer in hand from the Saxon government to fund another trip. Tischendorf was not bluffing. The Russians knew that such a trip might result in the remaining 347 leaves of the Codex being transported to Leipzig to complement the 43 leaves already there, and so quickly agreed to engage the Saxon foreigner to do the deed of extracting the Codex for Russia, whilst keeping him entirely in the dark about the Russian government's knowledge and intentions so as not to take the wind out of his sails. Tischendorf was elated, and relates:

The interest which my proposal excited, even within the imperial circle, inclined the Emperor to my favour. It obtained his approval in the month of September, 1858, and the funds which I asked for were placed at my disposal...and in the commencement of January, 1859, I again set sail for the East...By the end of the month of January I had reached the Convent of Mount Sinai.⁹⁹

⁹⁷ Uspensky, *Книга бытия моего. Дневники и автобиографические записки* (St Petersburg, 1894-1902), vol. VII. p.158.

⁹⁸ P.V. Bezobrazov, *Материалы для биографии епископа Порфирия Успенского*, (St. Petersburg, 1910), Vol. II. Cited by I. Sevcenko, *New Documents on Constantine Tischendorf and the Codex Sinaiticus*, (Brussels, 1964).

⁹⁹ Originally in *Wann wurden unsere Evangelien verfasst?* (Leipzig, 1865)

On this his third visit to St Catherine's monastery, Tischendorf came into possession of 347 leaves¹⁰⁰ of the codex from which he had previously carried away 43 leaves.¹⁰¹ With Russian support Tischendorf managed to remove all those leaves from the monastery (which at his request had been removed to the monastery's *metochion* in Cairo) on a written pledge (still extant) that he was borrowing the codex, and having it transported the easier to transcribe it, and would return it at the earliest request. The monastery never saw it again, in spite of its many requests. Once he had arranged removal of the Codex from Mount Sinai to Cairo, Tischendorf quickly claimed that he hit upon the idea that it would make a wonderful present for the Tsar. Tischendorf liked to take credit where he could, but the circumstances, suggestion and initiative were of course firmly planted in his mind by the Russians, since removing the Codex permanently to Russia had been their intention all along and their main purpose in funding his trip.¹⁰²

Tischendorf placed the Codex in the Tsar's hands in November 1859, who bestowed upon him honours and a lavish fortune for publishing a facsimile in 1862, the 1000th anniversary of the founding of the Russian Empire in 862. A great deal of political pressure was then applied by the Russians to the monastery to give up its claim to the codex, and at length the monastic community was browbeaten into signing away its rights in 1869.¹⁰³ This codex was then placed in the Imperial Library at St Petersburg.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁰ Tischendorf variously stated that the number of leaves taken in 1859 was 346 and 347. In fact, the last leaf in sequence recovered, Q93-f.7, which is in The Shepherd of Hermas, is only half a leaf, comprising two columns on the recto and two on the verso. One could thus state that 347 leaves were recovered if one includes half a leaf, or 346 leaves were recovered if the half leaf is not counted because it is a fragment.

¹⁰¹ Tischendorf only much later claimed that these comprised 86 Old Testament leaves that he had seen in 1844 but had been unable to remove, and a further 261 he claims he had not seen hitherto. No credence whatsoever can be given to the figure 86. The figure comes from his saying that the 43 leaves taken in 1844 was around a third of the total he had seen: 86 is merely double 43. But Tischendorf had never counted the leaves in 1844 so such exactness is absurd. In his letter to his wife written on February 15, 1859, he states that he had seen again the 70 to 80 leaves he left behind in 1844: the figure became inflated, precise but inaccurate, when told for public consumption. The true figure was approximately 74, not 86, from a contiguous block of 117 leaves separate from the other much larger contiguous block guarded by the sacristan.

¹⁰² We cannot fail to note the deep irony that Simonides wove into the fabric of his story that *he* had written the codex to be a wonderful present for the Tsar.

¹⁰³ The monks were not going to get it back, so the best they could do was to agree to accept compensation, and subsequently received 1332 Turkish pounds and 61½ piastres, the equivalent of 9,000 roubles, including 2,000 roubles for their Mount Tabor community.

¹⁰⁴ The leaves were sold in 1933 to the British Museum for £100,000, and transferred in 1973 to the British Library. The USSR retained the fragments that it had acquired separately, from Tischendorf (in 1858), Uspensky (in 1886) and the Society of Ancient Literature (in 1932); these fragments of six leaves from the codex are currently housed in the National Library of Russia in St Petersburg.

The 1975 'New Finds'

As Dr Cooper points out, Tischendorf did *not* in 1859 remove all the pages of the Codex that remained at St Catherine's. Others (comprising 12 leaves and many fragments) were lodged in a storeroom that was immured and only re-discovered in 1975, along with one and a half tonnes of other manuscripts, the so-called 'New Finds'.

It may be useful to repeat the account of Hieromonk Justin of Sinai delivered to The University of Leuven in September 2015:

[I]t was a moment of utter terror when, on 30 November 1971, a fire broke out in a kitchen opposite the Sinai basilica. The fire spread slowly but steadily through the kitchen, the monks' cells and a chapel along the north wall...It took some eight hours to put out the fire, and used up almost all of the water from the monastery's wells and cisterns.

Archimandrite Sophronios, the *skeuophylax* of the monastery, insisted on singlehandedly restoring this area. By 1975, he was working in the tower of Saint George, which projects from the north wall of the monastery. This area had narrowly escaped the fire. But an interior floor of the tower had collapsed many years before, owing to the great age of the timbers, and the poor quality of the construction materials available. He was clearing away the room when, on 25 May 1975, at 2.15 in the afternoon, he noticed a piece of parchment in the debris...

In centuries past, precious manuscripts were kept in the tower of Saint George, since it was one of the most secure parts of the monastery. Dilapidated manuscripts, loose quires, single leaves and fragments had been set aside in one corner of the room. In 1734, Archbishop Nikiphoros Marthales created new quarters for the library, and asked that all the monastery's manuscripts and books be gathered together in their new quarters. We know now that when the manuscripts were transferred from the tower of Saint George, the damaged fragments were left behind. It was this deposit that came to light in 1975, collectively known as the New Finds...

The most important discovery was twelve folios, two half folios, and twenty-three fragments from the Codex Sinaiticus.

Dr Cooper does not reference the above but quotes a 1987 report by Moshe Altbauer (who had been working there since 1968) that access to the room in which the parts of Codex Sinaiticus were found became inaccessible 'about 150 years ago'.

Calculating back from this date to around 1837 piques Dr Cooper's suspicion of a conspiracy (p.75):

Learning that the room was about to be sealed along with a chest full of manuscripts, did Tischendorf place the Sinaiticus leaves there, leaves which he thought might compromise his later claims for the antiquity of Sinaiticus? It is likely, very likely indeed.

It is not at all likely, because this storeroom on the fortification wall became inaccessible due to its collapse in the Sinai earthquake of 1839. The leaves of Sinaiticus discovered in 1975 had been buried and 'sealed' there since the emergency repair work done on the fortification wall in 1839,¹⁰⁵ the year Simonides arrived at Mt Athos, and five years before Tischendorf arrived at St Catherine's. The 1975 discovery of these Codex Sinaiticus leaves is thus fatal to Dr Cooper's plot in which Simonides' alleged codex was not delivered to St Catherine's until 1841 at the earliest, or seen by Tischendorf until 1844.

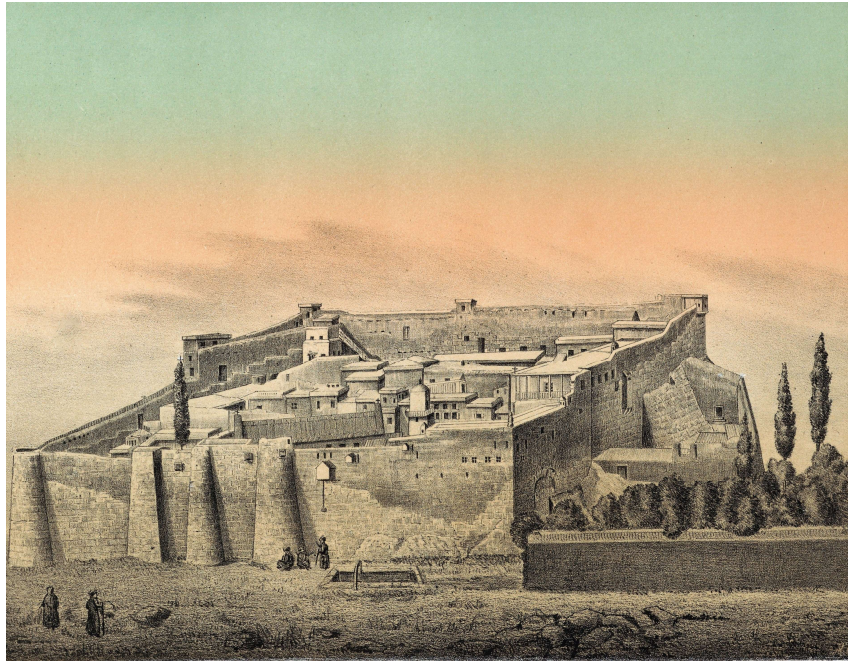


Figure 6 St Catherine's Monastery, Sinai, drawn during Porphyrius Uspensky's 1850 visit; published 1857.

¹⁰⁵ N.N. Ambraseys *et al*, *The Seismicity of Egypt, Arabia and the Red Sea* (Cambridge, 2005): 'c. 1839. Sinai. Rabino refers to the repairs of the fortification wall of St Catherine's monastery in Sinai during this year, following an earthquake that caused them some damage. Repairs to the 'museum' building in c.1840 are also mentioned. [Grigoriadis (1875), p.48; Rabino (1937), p.25; Ben-Manahem (1979), p.258].' This is confirmed by A.A. Umanets, who records that during his visit of 1843 he was informed that a recent earthquake had damaged the north-east wall such that it had threatened to collapse, and repairs had accordingly been done at the monastery's expense, *Поездка на Синай: с приобщением отрывков о Египте и Святой Земле* (St Petersburg, 1850).

Uspensky reports that in 1850 he learned from Vitaly the sacristan of precious articles that had been immured before 1843: 'The sacristan ...said that his predecessor, during his long illness, had been telling him that some treasures had been deposited in the wall, but in which one he did not say, and with that the secret died.' *Второе путешествие архимандрита Порфирия Успенского в Синайский монастырь в 1850 году*, (St Petersburg, 1856). This sounds more like deliberate deposition. However, Uspensky mentions that in 1845 the monks told him that manuscripts had been immured in the outer fortification wall. This proved to be good intelligence since that was where this cache of manuscripts was discovered in 1975.

CONSTANTINE SIMONIDES



Figure 7 Constantine Simonides (1824 – 1890) as a young man

Simonides' Account

Because Dr Cooper's thesis relies so much on the testimony of Constantine Simonides—to the extent that without it we suspect he would have no thesis—then it is incumbent on us to consider this person in some detail. In judging the reliability of any testimony, we must first judge something of the character of the witness and then impute our judgment to the quality of his testimony. For example, does the witness have a reputation for telling the truth? Does he have generally good references for his character and behaviour? Has the conduct of his life been consistent with honesty? Has he ever been convicted of fraud and deception? Has he ever been shown to have acted the part of a false witness? Is his testimony corroborated by genuinely independent witnesses? Is his present testimony contrary to facts that can be established with certainty? In answering such questions we are not suggesting that we can make an infallible deduction about whether any individual proposition is true or false: it is possible for a generally honest man to tell a lie, and for a compulsive liar to say something true. But we must make a judgment about the quality of the evidence set before us by considering such questions.

In assessing the quality of Simonides' testimony, one needs to take into account his history. He was arrested, charged, tried and imprisoned for fraud, and expelled

dishonourably from many places. He was proved to be a forger by applying perfectly straightforward analyses that had been used for centuries.¹⁰⁶ He had forged signatures and acted the part of a false witness to frame others. When his accounts are checked against reliable sources they are found to be false, distorted, or pure invention. As Niketas Siniossoglou describes:

Constantine Simonides is the founder of modern anti-philology, namely the systematic undermining of established philology by ostensible philological means, such as the edition and scholarly annotation of forged texts...who fought for national pride with the least commendable weapon: fraud.¹⁰⁷

Given this background it would be folly to accept at face value anything that Simonides said or wrote: one should be sceptical of everything, though there might prove to be some truths intermingled with a mass of falsehoods.¹⁰⁸

When Simonides saw sample facsimiles of Tischendorf's latest (1859) acquisition from Sinai,¹⁰⁹ he protested in private correspondence, and complained to the English biblical scholar and textual critic Samuel P. Tregelles that he had had sight of his own work.¹¹⁰ However, he was to receive no support from that quarter. Tregelles travelled to Leipzig in 1862 to inspect the Codex while the complete facsimile was being worked on by Tischendorf,¹¹¹ and concluded that Simonides' claim was

¹⁰⁶ Using philology, analysis of orthography, spotting anachronisms etc. He was detected by classic methods, for example at least one of his manuscripts was found to be a mere handwritten copy of a printed work, including the author's conjectural emendations, and printer's errors.

¹⁰⁷ Siniossoglou notes that the Greek State, the Greek Church, and the Greek academic establishment all concurred that Simonides was 'a devious trickster unlike any other in the history of philology.' Niketas Siniossoglou, *Constantine Simonides and Philosophy*, in *Die getäuschte Wissenschaft: Ein Genie betrügt Europa – Konstantinos Simonides* (2017), pp.53-4.

¹⁰⁸ David W. Daniels in his book *Is the 'World's Oldest Bible' a Fake?* states that some people 'seem to live and thrive on lies...They use...the most convincing stories, to get you to believe them...Don't believe what they say. Look at what they do...Always ask...' 'Is the person trustworthy who is verifying this?' 'It is astonishing that Daniels never seriously applies this test to the infamous liar Constantine Simonides, for had he done so then his book would never have been written.

¹⁰⁹ C. Tischendorf, *Notitia Editionis Codicis Bibliorum Sinaitici* (Leipzig, 1860), pp.22-39. These showed parts of Tobit, Judith, 1 and 4 Maccabees, Isaiah, Psalms, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, Matthew, Mark, John, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, 2 Thessalonians, Hebrews, Acts, James, Revelation, and Barnabas in simple typographical facsimile, and part of the leaf containing the end of Luke in realistic facsimile.

¹¹⁰ Benjamin Wills Newton showed Simonides the work by Tischendorf. Simonides and Tregelles were not in friendship, but they had a mutual friend in B.W. Newton. Simonides wrote Tregelles several letters, firstly concerning papyri that Simonides had forged in Liverpool and was trying to pass off as apostolic, and he sent Tregelles a copy of his biography by Stewart before making any claims in correspondence to Tregelles about Codex Sinaiticus. Writing to Robert Scott, July 15, 1864, Tregelles relates, 'The claims of Simonides are contradicted by the published memoir of himself: I have a copy of this which he sent me himself before he pretended to have been the scribe.'

¹¹¹ Another Englishman who was shown the Codex by Tischendorf in Leipzig that summer (1862) was the Unitarian minister John James Tayler, who denied Johannine authorship of the fourth Gospel.

absurd.¹¹² Later that year, shortly before the complete facsimile of the fruit of Tischendorf's 1859 visit was published, F.J.A. Hort (of Westcott and Hort fame) sent to *The Manchester Guardian*¹¹³ details of private correspondence to him from Tregelles in which the latter wrote, 'I need hardly say that the story of Simonides that he wrote the MS. is as false and absurd as possible'.¹¹⁴ Hort's letter to a national newspaper provoked Simonides to go public with his own account beginning with a lengthy letter appearing in *The Guardian* on September 3, 1862. Some brief extracts that summarize the case are as follows:¹¹⁵

About the end of the year 1839, the venerable Benedict, my uncle, spiritual head of the monastery of the holy martyr Panteleemon in Mount Athos, wished to present to the Emperor Nicholas I., of Russia, some gift from the sacred mountain, in grateful acknowledgment of the presents which had from time to time been offered to the monastery of the martyr...[and] decided upon a copy of the Old and New Testaments, written according to the ancient form, in capital letters, and on parchment...together with the remains of the seven apostolic fathers...

First I copied out the Old and New Testaments, then the Epistle of Barnabas, the first part of the pastoral writings of Hermas in capital letters (or uncial characters)...

Some time after this, having removed to Constantinople, I showed the work to the patriarch...Constantius... Shortly after this, I was placed under the protection of the illustrious Countess Etleng and her brother, A.S. Sturtzas;¹¹⁶ but before departing to Odessa, I went over to the island of Antigonous to visit Constantius...[and I] left the packet for him with a letter...

I returned to Constantinople, and from thence went to Odessa in November, 1841.

In 1846 I again returned to Constantinople...to visit Constantius...and we conversed...upon my transcript, when he informed me that he had sent it some time previously to Mount Sinai. In 1852 I saw it there myself,¹¹⁷ and begged the librarian¹¹⁸

¹¹² Tregelles wrote to B.W. Newton while he was inspecting the Codex at Leipzig in June 1862, 'Nothing can be more absurd than the notion that this M.S. is a modern forgery: I believe I know something of Greek M.S.S. & am positively convinced that this is a M.S. of the fourth century.'

¹¹³ Hereafter referred to as *The Guardian*, as it later became known.

¹¹⁴ Later Tregelles would write to *The Guardian* newspaper against those who gave credence to Simonides that 'Whoever pretends that Cod. Sinaiticus can be modern, virtually asserts that it was intended to deceive'.

¹¹⁵ Extracted from letters to *The Guardian* of September 3, 1862 and a 'correction' on August 26, 1863.

¹¹⁶ This is Roxandra Scarlatovna Edling-Sturdza (1786–1844) and her brother Alexandru S. Sturdza (Александр Скарлатович Стурдза), (1791–1854).

¹¹⁷ In this letter there is the one visit in 1852. In a subsequent letter there is another visit, in 1844. In yet another letter there is a *third* visit of unspecified date. This is all pure invention, but is poking fun at Tischendorf, who made three visits to St Catherine's. Simonides times his (imaginary) 1844 visit just days *before* Tischendorf's 1844 visit to sharpen the coincidence. Simonides is also parodying Tischendorf's idea that the Codex would make a wonderful present to the Tsar by weaving into his

to inform me how the monastery had acquired it but he did not appear to know anything of the matter...

[T]aking it in my hands [I] found it somewhat altered in form, both externally and internally, for it had an older appearance than it ought to have had, and the MS. was defective in part¹¹⁹...[and] the dedication to the Emperor Nicholas...had been taken out...

When, about two years ago,¹²⁰ I saw the first fac-similes of Tischendorf, which were put into my hand at Liverpool, by Mr. Newton,¹²¹ a friend of Dr. Tregelles, I at once recognized my own work, as I immediately told him...

This account of Simonides is based on demonstrable falsehoods from the very first sentence of the account. Dr Cooper appears to believe that because *some* of the details that Simonides furnishes can be shown to be true then he was a trustworthy character. But truth telling doesn't work like that. It is not enough to produce evidence that Simonides made a few true statements, and thereby imply that he was likely telling the truth in his narrative, all the while *overlooking* incontrovertible evidence aplenty that he was definitely *not* telling the truth in most aspects of his story. Liars and deceivers seldom make up every single aspect of their story: they use a few known facts as hooks upon which to hang a multitude of fabrications. In this matter Simonides had form, not merely in his life of fraud with respect to manuscripts, but in his waging a campaign of deception through the columns of a newspaper, which began almost immediately after his return from Russia in 1846. In this we see that Simonides was intent on destroying lives – literally physically and reputationally. We refer firstly to his well-documented and notorious persecution of the American missionary Dr Jonas King, a godly Calvinist minister responsible for the fledgling evangelical witness in Greece. Writing to the Secretary of the Board of Missions, Dr King reports

tale that it was his (imaginary) uncle Benedict's idea to make it a gift for the Tsar twenty years previously.

¹¹⁸ The Codex was not in the library open to visitors and scholars, and it would not have been shown to a traveller such as Simonides, since the sacristan, Vitaly, was under strict advice from Uspensky not to do so. By this date Uspensky had studied the Codex in great detail, both in 1845 and 1850, and certainly would have been able to tell whether it had been written as recently as 1840!

¹¹⁹ In a separate letter Simonides states that when he saw it in 1844 and 1852 it nevertheless contained the whole Pentateuch entire. We note that Uspensky recorded what was in the Codex in 1845, and it was unchanged in 1850. The first 35 quires were missing, Genesis to Chronicles.

¹²⁰ There are grounds to doubt that it was as far back as 1860 since as late as December 13, 1861 Simonides wrote the *The Athenaeum* (see issue December 21, 1861, p.849), 'It is to be regretted that you see no cause for thankfulness to God in the discovery of the earliest MSS. of the New Testament extant; and I fear Mr. Tischendorf came in for a share of your animadversions for the praise which he offered to God for his discovery of the 'Codex Sinaiticus.'

¹²¹ Benjamin Wills Newton's first wife was cousin to Tregelles.

I have learned, from a source which I deem worthy of confidence, that there are about fifty persons combined here, who are determined to kill me... that they intended, when I should go out, to kill me, and that if they could not accomplish this in any other way, they would come and burn my house!¹²²

We take up the developments in the reports of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions:

The Greek newspapers soon after freely admitted that [Dr King's] life would have been sacrificed...By more recent letters...it appears that threats of serious injury to himself and his children have been uttered. One person [= Constantine Simonides, see below] has been arrested and punished for his conduct towards the missionary. But this does not seem to check the malice of his enemies; and there is evidently some danger to be apprehended from their lawlessness.¹²³

The case of Dr. King has passed through some deeply interesting phases, during the past year. The Board were informed, at the close of the last Report on this mission, that dangers were threatening to increase around our missionary brother. One person, named Simonides, had gone so far in his threats of personal injury, that the government had thought it necessary to arrest and punish him. An angry article appeared, soon after, in the "Age," one of the principal newspapers of Athens...declaring Dr. King to be an outlaw. The article contained a false report of a sermon, in which Dr. King was represented as saying things fitted to excite general indignation against him... On the 24th of July, the same paper contained another inflammatory article...On the 28th of July, a very extraordinary article appeared in the Age, signed by Simonides, entitled 'the Orgies'... It is difficult to believe that such incredible and infamous fabrications were received as truth by any intelligent citizen of Athens; yet they are said to have had a general credence.¹²⁴

Simonides was the most prominent and active agent among a powerful group bent on destroying the Protestant cause in Greece,¹²⁵ a reputation he publicly boasted about for decades, and was content to spread the most detestable and malicious slanders imaginable against Dr King, and to perjure himself, claiming to be an eyewitness to late night orgies at the missionary's home. Cornelius Fenton relates,

The stories were perhaps the most outrageous lies that human or diabolical ingenuity ever invented. All who knew Dr. King – and every person of note in the Kingdom of Greece is included in this category, for they all knew that he was a man of the austere virtue, a puritan of the puritans – they saw at once the drift and

¹²² *The English Presbyterian Messenger*, London, October 1846, p.301.

¹²³ *Report of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions* (Boston, 1847).

¹²⁴ *Report of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions* (Boston, 1848).

¹²⁵ Writing June 23, 1853 to A. Paicos, the Greek Minister of Foreign affairs, George Marsh, the United States Minister Resident in the Ottoman Empire, recalls 'the history of the persecutions of Dr. King, in 1846 and 1847, in which Simonides was the most conspicuous actor'.

purpose of these detestable falsehoods...Simonides has since confessed the infamous part he acted in that drama of slander and perjury, the persecution of Dr. King.¹²⁶

A judicial inquiry later proved that this was all a fraud by Simonides, and he was arrested and convicted of forgery (πλαστογραφία). Notwithstanding, Simonides' newspaper campaign sparked off a series of events and incidents, the flames of which Simonides fanned by publishing more and more lies, such that Dr King and his family came into mortal danger again from mob violence, and chose to leave the country for a season. Simonides then took the opportunity to gloat about the success of his campaign in a further newspaper article:

The false apostle, Jonas King, is out of the Greek commonwealth. His nation-corrupting Satanic congregation of strange doctrine, already bearing date of fifteen years, has now been destroyed. The terrible progress of the great common scandal of religious strange doctrine, has been smitten on the head...Of all the foreign holy apostles, of various religions and various heresies, unhappily for Greece, heaped together from every corner, no one became more to be feared, and more destructive, than the imposter and deceiver, Jonas King.¹²⁷

Not content with this severe damage to the evangelical Protestant witness in Greece, Simonides then turned his attention to persecuting the members of the evangelical Protestant church who remained, and the Reformed and Protestant literature that Dr King had translated and written, which literature when Dr King returned became the very grounds on which he was further persecuted, charged and imprisoned. The diplomatic tensions eventually ran so high that three gunboats from the United States' Mediterranean squadron were dispatched to Athens,¹²⁸ the President of the United States, Franklin Pierce, became personally involved, and the matter was referred by him to the US Congress and appears in its official record, with copious references to Simonides and translations of his newspaper articles. These documents run to hundreds of pages, and the correspondence from George Perkins Marsh, the United States Minister Resident in the Ottoman Empire, to US Secretary of State Daniel Webster well capture the role that Simonides was playing in concert with the enemies of the gospel:

The enemies of Mr. King's mission...had recourse to lying; and of all the false witnesses that came, a man by the name of Simonides, who had spent some years with the monks on Mount Athos, was the principal.

¹²⁶ *Boston Daily Advertiser*, April 3, 1856. The 'confession' that Fenton relates to is not one of contrition but of prideful boasting. In England in 1859 he was still boasting of his persecuting zeal against Jonas King and his part in the newspaper smears against him.

¹²⁷ Translation of Simonides' article appearing in the documents submitted to the US Congress by the President of the United States, Franklin Pierce, December 12, 1854, and referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations. See Congressional Edition, Vol. 751, US Government Printing Office, 1855.

¹²⁸ The USS Cumberland, the USS Levant, and the USS St Louis.

Wednesday, the 28th of July, 1847, an article appeared in "The Age", one of the first newspapers in Athens, called "The Orgies," and signed by Simonides, stating that he was present at Mr. King's house, on certain nights, when these orgies were performed by Mr. King, and that he (Simonides) had been an eye-witness of the whole, and was ready to be examined on the subject by any court of justice...Simonides then proceeded to describe, with great particularity, these orgies, which, he says, he witnessed, giving the day and the hour when performed, and the exact number of persons present.¹²⁹

And

In 1847, a swindler, named Simonides, notorious throughout Turkey, Russia, and Greece as an imposter, counterfeiter, and cheat, published in the columns of the Age a description of certain pretended "orgies" which he had witnessed at Dr. King's house as religious ceremonies performed by him. Simonides was well known as a special protégé, favourite, and instrument of the clerical party...[H]is statements [were] monstrously and palpably false...and Dr. King was in no small danger of personal violence in consequence of the popular excitement which these disclosures and the comments of his enemies upon them produced...[T]here can be no doubt that this libel was assiduously circulated...with a full knowledge of its absolute falsehood. At present no man would be bold enough to deny the utter and complete groundlessness of the whole story; but no formal or public recantation or contradiction of the slander has ever been made.¹³⁰

But as Dr King himself notes in 1849, once Simonides' other line of deceit and lies—his lucrative trade in forged manuscripts—was discovered and exposed, his reputation as a supposed eyewitness of services in a Reformed Protestant church was greatly tarnished:

Greece. — In a letter bearing date January 26 [1849], Mr. King states that Simonides, the writer of "the orgies," which obliged our missionary brother to withdraw from Athens for a time, has recently occasioned much discussion and excitement, as the pretended discoverer of certain Greek manuscripts (Homer, Hesiod. Anacreon, &c.) claimed to be more ancient than any other in the world. According to the Minerva, an Athenian newspaper, some men of learning at first thought them genuine; but a closer inspection showed that they were a forgery, executed with uncommon skill. "All this," Mr. King says, "is working wonderfully in my favor, by opening the eyes of the people to see that Simonides is a deceiver and a liar of no ordinary character."¹³¹

¹²⁹ George P. Marsh to Hon. Daniel Webster, Athens, August 21, 1852.

¹³⁰ Ibid. Indeed, Simonides continued to boast of his actions in this matter, references to his newspaper libels being repeated in Stewart's *Biographical Memoir* of 1859: this was in England at the start of the 'Simonides Affair' over Codex Sinaiticus, so not something in the past that he was ashamed of and wished to be forgotten. He was still glorying in lies, and the powerful effects of them.

¹³¹ *The Missionary Herald*, April 1849: pp 175-6.

We have already noted how the Homer manuscript was detected: it was found to be a manuscript copy of Wolf's printed edition, including all its printing errors. However, the professor at the University of Athens who exposed his fraud then became a target for destruction through the pen of Simonides, as Jonas King records

Simonides, who wrote the 'orgies' has lost much of his influence by having accused one of the Professors in the University of heterodoxy, and, consequently, having excited against him a large number of the students; and he was some time since waylaid and severely beaten.¹³²

However, Simonides' mastery of written Greek came much later than would appear to be indicated by his newspaper smear campaign articles, for he was still incapable of writing these articles in the 1840s entirely from his own resources. Tracing this back, we find that the monks at the Panteleimon monastery judged that when he arrived there in November 1839,

He was a poor boy, who could, of course, write Greek, but not much more.¹³³

But Simonides 'on account of his behaviour...was soon denied further hospitality' at that monastery,¹³⁴ and being 'dismissed in consequence of his disorderly and scandalous conduct' ¹³⁵ had to be moved elsewhere. The Panteleimon monastery, who arranged for Simonides to study in Odessa, advise that he did not last long there either:

¹³² *Report of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions* (Boston, 1848).

¹³³ *Православное Обозрение*, 1863, X, p.362ff. The term for 'boy' could not be used for a youth older than 15. To suggest—as Simonides does—that three months later he was engaged in writing out the whole Bible in uncials on parchment in the style of the fourth century is thus utterly ridiculous.

¹³⁴ These are the words of the Panteleimon monastery itself, see *Православное Обозрение*, 1863, X, p.362ff.

¹³⁵ Letter of Amphilochius, Bishop of Pelusium, Alexandria, October 5, 1863, to Edwin J. Davies H.B.M. Consular Chaplain, Alexandria. Amphilochius entered the Panteleimon monastery in 1843 and having known Simonides in Odessa enquired about him and 'was informed that [Simonides] had indeed lived there, but had been dismissed in consequence of his disorderly and scandalous conduct, and that he had no relationship with the Reverend Benedict'. **The Panteleimon monastery subsequently made it a matter of public knowledge:** 'Benedict, who died in 1841, was neither Simonides' uncle, nor a relative, but only a compatriot. This kind old man, whose example he should have followed, really interceded here for his fellow countryman, so that he could stay here for some time for his spiritual good. But on account of his behaviour the young man did not justify the care of the elder Benedict, and therefore the future glorious adventurer was soon denied further hospitality here.' *Православное Обозрение*, 1863, X, p.362ff.

When Simonides paid a visit to Mount Athos again in 1851 he was refused entrance to the library of the Panteleimon monastery and so went to other monasteries, and was found ripping out and stealing sheets from precious manuscripts (three leaves of *The Shepherd of Hermas* was one example, which he subsequently sold in Leipzig) and, says Amphilochius who was there and met Simonides at the time, 'he departed from the holy mountain with disgrace.'

Simonides was accepted under the patronage of Mr Sturdza, and in his dependency placed in the Odessa Richelieu Lyceum to learn to read and write...But...was soon expelled from the Lyceum with dishonour.¹³⁶

So here, in November 1841, we find that Simonides had only elementary reading and writing skills, and yet, according to his own incredible account, believed by Dr Cooper, had already finished the transcription of a complete Bible in uncials within a matter of months. No one acquainted with Simonides during that time would believe such nonsense. At the Odessa school Simonides became acquainted with Amphilochius during 1841-2, who confirms that he had

a slight knowledge of the rudiments of our ancient Greek language...[but] having attended...for some few months only the lessons at Odessa, he was expelled from the school in consequence of his disorderly conduct.¹³⁷

Having emerged from Russia in 1846, Simonides had improved in his reading and writing skills, but had still not yet sufficiently mastered Greek syntax, and required the services of others to polish his writings for public consumption. We have an interesting view into Simonides' time in Athens from Alexandros Lykourgos (later professor of theology at the University of Athens, and bishop of Syros and Tenos), which reveals that it was not earlier than 1850 that Simonides got a reasonable grip of Greek syntax and style:

As he lived in Athens near my old home and visited us frequently, I soon noticed that he was lacking in higher education but not in the sense of the same. Through a very lively imagination and a sense for beauty, as well as a retentive memory, he made up for some of what was missing. He eagerly read the Greek writers, as far as they were accessible, and sought in all possible ways to broaden his archaeological and historical knowledge. He also knew how to give his writing a certain charm and great liveliness by coincidences and by imitating the ancients. As he often tried productions, he quite keenly felt his weakness in style, because many mistakes and solecisms escaped his pen. For this reason he also learned from the scholars among his acquaintances for articles that he intended for the newspapers. In this embarrassment, which highlighted his inadequate education, combined with the shame of having been taught in a municipal school, he asked me in 1850 to give him instruction in Greek syntax, desiring that this relationship, which made me, a student, his teacher, not be made public. Out of pure interest for him, I allowed myself to be persuaded to comply with his request. I had the opportunity more and more to get to know his easy and quick perception; for he understood quite well the speeches of Demosthenes, which we read together, and also made progress in syntax. My interest in him grew in the hope that increased education would lessen his recklessness, and that he would mature in his gifts into a good and useful man. I

¹³⁶ *Православное Обозрение*, 1863, X, p.362ff.

¹³⁷ Letter of Amphilochius, October 5, 1863, to Edwin J. Davies.

considered it a true Christian duty to contribute as much as possible to his recovery. But after two months he gave up this instruction; he probably found in it an unwelcome bridle on his unruly spirit, which in his vast fantasies he preferred to continue; and my frequent chastisement of him for his vanity and indiscretions was not to his liking.¹³⁸

Simonides' overtly laudatory *Biographical Memoir* in the name of Charles Stewart (published 1859), for which practically all the information was supplied by Simonides himself and is a mixture of fact and fiction,¹³⁹ deals with this period deplorably in suggesting that Simonides was being 'especially honourable' in waging his newspaper smear campaigns. This exemplifies what a twisted perspective Simonides had on such matters. Even in 1859, then, he was still revelling in the 'great success' of his 'greatest exertions' to harm Jonas King and the cause of the gospel in Greece:

Arriving at Athens on 12th July, 1846...Simonides soon became as active a politician as any in the capital...He contributed many articles to the Athenian papers and denounced the party of Rhancabe [= Alexandros Rangavis] as traitors to Greece. M. Jonas [King]...he attacked with such great vigour and success that he procured his banishment from Greece, though this was accomplished only by the greatest exertions of Simonides, and by efforts in which he fearlessly risked his own life.¹⁴⁰

Simonides risked and suffered punishment as a malefactor not for anything remotely honourable but on account of his own malice, forgery and diabolical lies.¹⁴¹

¹³⁸ A. Lykourgos, *Enthüllungen über den Simonides-dindorfschen Uranios* (Leipzig, 1856), pp.55-56. Lykourgos had the same experience as those at the Panteleimon monastery 1839-41 and the Greek school at Odessa in 1841-2, from which Simonides was expelled for unruly behaviour. In 1855, when Simonides came to Leipzig, Lykourgos was studying there, and Lykourgos allowed Simonides to stay with him for some months. They fell out permanently when Lykourgos discovered that the rumours about Simonides, which he had tried not to believe, were fully justified, and Simonides tried to deceive the University of Leipzig. Though Simonides had only slight competence in Greek when he left Mount Athos in 1841, and that still by 1850 his education and competence in Greek were only fair, Simonides in the details given in the *Biographical Memoir*, and in the forged manuscripts that he claimed to have had published in Russia in 1853 (his *Autographa* etc), states that he had received a PhD in Moscow in the early 1840s. This appears to be yet another deception.

¹³⁹ Charles Stewart appears to have played little more of a role in this biography than to have translated it: it bears marks of having been composed originally in Greek, and all the information was supplied by Simonides in 1858. It is, in effect, a hagiographic autobiography. Simonides wrote to Stewart in 'Romaic' modern Greek, so he was presumably a friend among the Greek community in England and had anglicized his name (which is spelled in various ways in the correspondence).

¹⁴⁰ C. Stewart, *Biographical Memoir*, (1859), p.10.

¹⁴¹ The *Biographical Memoir* has an almost farcical way of papering over inconvenient periods in Simonides' life. Going on the run is stated euphemistically: 'his personal safety was endangered...he soon retired, and departed into Thessaly' (then outside Greece); likewise, being found guilty and sentenced to jail becomes 'a dislike towards Simonides that afterwards produced unfavourable results', the 'unfavourable results' being that 'The remainder of the stay of Simonides in this city was

For his forging the signature of the aforementioned Alexandros Rangavis, sometime Minister of Foreign Affairs, falsely to implicate him as a French partisan, he served a jail term.¹⁴² A footnote to this hagiographic account in the *Memoir* gives an extensive list (obviously supplied by Simonides) of the newspaper articles in which Simonides had his lies printed, which include among others 'AIQN Nos. 792, 793, 794, 795, 796', the sequence of persecuting articles against Rev. Jonas King, including the especially infamous 'eyewitness' account 'The Orgies' (№ 794). To *glory* in such wicked libels and perjuries from the safe haven of England, even to the extent of supplying references to the original articles, is tantamount to repeating the charges, and this tells us much about the deplorable nature of the character under consideration. But it also tells us that at the very time that Simonides was protesting that he wrote Codex Sinaiticus,¹⁴³ he was prepared brazenly to stand by supposed eyewitness accounts of his that were utterly baseless and intentionally destructive towards Protestantism and the Reformed faith, boasting that he was 'the scourge' of Protestants in Greece and had successfully 'wiped out from Greece the filth of these evildoers'.¹⁴⁴ This, then, is an important part of the back story to Simonides' supposed eyewitness tale about Codex Sinaiticus, of which background not a word emerges from the pen of Dr Cooper.¹⁴⁵ The full details of Simonides' life from 1846 onwards can be found elsewhere, but any detailed account will evidence that Simonides was indeed 'a deceiver and a liar of no ordinary character' who by 1862 had for sixteen years established a truly international reputation for lying, cheating, perjury, fraud and religious persecution, known throughout Europe and the USA.

occupied in matters of little importance'. 'Long illnesses' and 'extended excursions' on holiday are used at other times to cover periods that Simonides would rather keep quiet about.

¹⁴² See for example Lykourgos, *op. cit.* Lykourgos knew Simonides personally and shared a house with him for three months. Simonides would have considered Rangavis a traitor because he was married in the Anglican church in Athens. Simonides developed a passionate hatred of Rangavis because the latter competently exposed Simonides as a forger, e.g. in the pages of the journal *Pandora*, e.g. Vol. 2 (1851), pp. 595–601. See also in the *Biographical Memoir*.

¹⁴³ Tischendorf's 'discovery' of Codex Sinaiticus finds a place (rather inaccurately, based on early and limited information in mid-1859) in the *Biographical Memoir* of August 1859 thus: 'M. Tisendorf also lately discovered in a certain monastery in Egypt the Old Testament and part of the New, as well as the 1st Book of Hermas, all of which were written in the 2nd Century, or 1750 years ago. This MS. is represented to be in excellent condition. From this we may conclude that parchment manuscripts may be preserved for almost an unlimited period.' Simonides was portraying the Codex as being two centuries older than Tischendorf was claiming.

¹⁴⁴ Simonides through an *alter ego* Kallinikos (see below) created biographical material about himself. Included within the Kallinikos 'biography' of Simonides is that 'In 1846 [Simonides] went to...Greece, where he became a scourge of the American pseudo-apostles, and wiped out from Greece the filth of these evildoers.' The Greek word used for 'filth' here means defilement that is purged away, filthy effluent. Simonides is here putting praise of himself into the mouth of his *alter ego* Kallinikos, still boasting of his persecution of evangelical Christians in Greece. This appears in Simonides' *Autographa*, written in 1862-3 during the Sinaiticus controversy to pad out a false back story, with forged place and date (Moscow, 1853).

¹⁴⁵ This observation applies equally to David W. Daniels in his book *Is the 'World's Oldest Bible' a Fake?*

Returning now, therefore, to Simonides' letter to *The Guardian* of September 3, 1862, and taking the very first sentence of his 'story',

About the end of the year 1839, the venerable Benedict, my uncle, spiritual head of the monastery of the holy martyr Panteleemon in Mount Athos, wished to present to the Emperor Nicholas I., of Russia, some gift from the sacred mountain, in grateful acknowledgment of the presents which had from time to time been offered to the monastery of the martyr.

Dr Cooper avers that 'Simonides...was telling the truth' (p.8), but nothing could be further from the truth, and we therefore wonder what fact checking Dr Cooper has done to establish whether there is any truth whatsoever in the plain propositions that Benedict was (a) Simonides' uncle, and (b) the hegumen (Abbot) of the monastery, and (c) desirous to present the Tsar with a gift, which he goes on to describe as a codex of the Bible written in an ancient style. If there is no truth in these initial propositions then the rest that hangs on them can reasonably be considered a hoax. Dr Cooper protests that there is solid evidence that Simonides and Benedict really *were* at the Panteleimon monastery at Mount Athos in 1839, which fact he presents as indicative of the truthfulness of the whole of Simonides' claimed account of production of the Codex; but that is as fallacious as claiming that because Jonas King really *did* hold Protestant services at his house in Athens in 1847, then this is indicative of the truthfulness of Simonides' claimed eyewitness accounts of orgies thereat. Very regrettably, Dr Cooper waxes hot against anyone who might be sceptical of Simonides' narrative and seeks (as does this present reviewer) to set forth the truth, which cannot but demonstrate that Simonides' tale is a pack of lies, for he says (p.38),

[I]t is instructive to see how the press and academe treated any evidence whatsoever that might have exonerated Simonides or conversely have damned Tischendorf, the critics' darling. It is not just a simple case of dismissal. It involved blatant lies – lies, moreover, which were deliberately and deceptively engineered.

Most assuredly, there is no evidence that 'might have exonerated Simonides', for there is far too great a pile of evidence that implicates *him* in 'blatant lies...which were deliberately and deceptively engineered'. This particular episode was simply another in a long line of deceptions stretching back years. Truth be told: the 'most outrageous lies that human or diabolical ingenuity ever invented' were foisted upon the world by Simonides – certainly from 1846 and without intermission thereafter – and in this present matter right from the very first sentence of his account, which includes blatant lies, the foundation of dozens more.

No one doubts that in late 1839 Simonides was at the Panteleimon monastery, as was Benedict, a hierodeacon and a teacher, but Benedict was never at any time the

spiritual head of that monastery;¹⁴⁶ neither was he Simonides' uncle. Yet Simonides repeated these lies again and again, including in his work *The Periplus of Hannon* (London, 1864), adding that Benedict was the abbot whom Robert Curzon met at the monastery in 1837.¹⁴⁷ It is not difficult to discover who the abbot/hegumen really was at the time: it was Gerasim (Greek 'Gerasimos'), who was the spiritual head continuously from 1821 until his death in 1875.

Hegumen Gerasim 'the Svjatogorets' is revered by the Russians because it was he who resumed the links between the St Panteleimon 'Russico' monastery and the Russian empire, and there is happily a great deal of written material about him from first hand accounts. He was born Georgy in 1772, of parents Basil and Photinia of Bulgarian ancestry, in the village of Evdomista, diocese of Drama, Macedonia. After stays in several monasteries, he eventually settled in the St Panteleimon in 1821. However, the Greek War of Independence immediately supervened, and a few days later Savva, the very old hegumen of the St Panteleimon monastery, died, having previously nominated Gerasim as his successor. Turkish troops occupied and trashed the Panteleimon monastery, especially because of its ancient Russian connection, forcing Gerasim, now the acting hegumen, and the other monks of St Panteleimon to go into hiding, many of them in Morea in the Peloponnese,¹⁴⁸ for the nine years of the war. When the monks returned to Mount Athos in 1830 they formally elected Gerasim as hegumen, and this election was ratified by the Patriarch of Constantinople in 1833. Gerasim continued as hegumen until his death in 1875, aged 103.

¹⁴⁶ In any case, a hierodeacon was not permitted to be a hegumen of a coenobitic monastery in Eastern Orthodoxy, such as the Panteleimon monastery on Athos: a hegumen was required to be an ordained priest.

¹⁴⁷ Simonides could maintain the deception because, if readers consulted Curzon's work, they would find that Curzon gave no name: 'From Xenephou I went on to Russico [i.e. the Panteleimon monastery], where they were repairing the injuries which different parts of the edifice had sustained during the late Greek war [Turkey, 1821-30]. The agoumenos [= hegumen] of this monastery was a remarkably gentlemanlike and accomplished man; he spoke several languages and ruled over a hundred and thirty monks.' *Visits to Monasteries in the Levant*, (London, 1849), p.413.

The first reference we have found to the lie that Benedict was the hegumen of the Panteleimon monastery appears in a letter from Simonides to *The Athenaeum* (issue December 21, 1861, p.849): '[M]y late uncle...Benedict, the confidential adviser and spiritual father of John Capo-d'Istrias; and after his death [in 1831], Superior of the Monastery St. Panteleimon (Rosicon), in Mount Athos'.

¹⁴⁸ Benedict and Prokopios Dendrinis, however, went to the island of Paros in the Southern Aegean as teachers of young boys. It was on the Greek islands in the 1820s that they first encountered a very young Constantine Simonides, and this is their connection with him, not a familiar one.



Figure 8 Gerasim (1772-1875), Hegumen (1821 – 75) of the St Pantaleimon Monastery, Mount Athos.

There is of course official documentation showing that Gerasim was the hegumen over that period, and there are numerous first hand accounts of monks and visitors written independently of the ‘Simonides Affair’ that confirm it.¹⁴⁹ Uspensky, for

¹⁴⁹ Almost all are in Greek and Russian and difficult for English readers to access. There are a few English works in the secondary literature, however, and we offer the following: G. Speake, *Mount Athos: Renewal in Paradise* (Yale, 2004), p.146: ‘When St Panteleimonos, the Russian monastery, became a coenobium in 1803 it had been entirely Greek for eighty years. This remained the case even after the Greek War of Independence, and by 1835 it was bankrupt. The Greek monks, under their abbot Gerasimos, decided that the only course of action open to them was to invite the Russians, described by the itinerant Russian Athonite monk Parfeny Aggeev as ‘the inhabitants of this house’, to return.’ Serge Bolshakoff, *Russian Mystics* (1977), p.227: ‘The Russians lived dispersed all over Mount Athos until 1839, when the abbot of St Panteleimon, Gerasim, invited them to come to settle in his monastery.’ Nicholas Fennell: *Parfeny Aggeev and Russian Pilgrimage to Mount Athos in The Monastic Magnet: Roads to and from Mount Athos* (2008): ‘Parfeny Aggeev is of unique importance because he personally knew the most important figures in the Athonite community in the mid-nineteenth century...Parfeny also describes in detail Abbot Gerasim and Deacon Venediktos [=Benedict] of St Panteleimon, Father-Confessor Ieronim, Prior Akaky of the Prophet Elijah Skete and a number of Russian ascetics on Athos, all of whom he knew personally.’ For this original account see Parfeny (P. Ageev), *Сказание о странствии и путешествии по России, Молдавии, Турции и Святой Земле: Постриженника святыя горы Афонския инока Парфения* (Moscow, 1855), Vol. 2, pp. 141-7, Vol. 4, pp.260-4. Ageev describes the day that the Russian monks were admitted (November 21, 1839) and the roles of hierodeacon Benedict and the hegumen Gerasim. There is also the first hand witness in

example, visited the Panteleimon monastery in 1845 (shortly after visiting St Catherine's monastery in Sinai), where he met and described the hegumen Gerasim. Having been given access to the archives, Uspensky wrote the first detailed account of the history of the monastery covering 800 years from its foundation to the installation of its current hegumen, Gerasim, as he notes in his published account *Первое путешествие в Афонские монастыри и скиты* ['The first trip to Athos monasteries and sketes']:

I was given all the legal records of the monastery, beginning in [AD]1030 and ending with the letter of the Ecumenical Patriarch Constantius, in which he confirmed the coenobium in Russica and the election of Hieromonk Gerasim as the hegumen of this monastery.¹⁵⁰

Accordingly, that letter appears in Uspensky's *Указатель актов, хранящихся в обителях св. горы Афонской* ['Index of acts stored in the monasteries of the Holy Mount Athos'] published in 1847.¹⁵¹

the diary entry of hieromonk Anikiya of June 18, 1835 in Anikiya (S.A. Shirinsky-Shikhmatov), *Путешествие иеромонаха Аникиты по святым местам Востока в 1834–1836 годах* (St Petersburg, 1891): 'On the 18th [June, 1835], early in the morning I went to the Russian Panteleimon Monastery...It is called Russian by name only (for once the Russians actually lived in it, but all were suddenly cut off by the Greeks: and since that time, about one hundred and fifty years ago, there have been only Greeks living in it who take their own and Russians into the congregation), but it belongs to the Greeks and is one of the best coenobitic monasteries of Athos according to the strictness of the life of the monastic. The abbot of the same, elder Gerasim, and the pious elderly teacher [= Benedict?], and the spiritual people really accepted me, the sinner, with great love.' See also hieromonk Sergiy (Vesnina): *Сочинения и письма Святогорца* (Moscow, 2006), p.168; Selevkij (S.T. Trofimov), *Разсказъ святогорца схимонаха Селевкія о своей жизни и о странствіи по святымъ мѣстамъ* (St Petersburg, 1860); *St Panteleimon Monastery: Русскій Аѳонскій отечникъ XIX–XX вѣковъ* Vol.1, (2012); Alexey Afanasievich Dmitrievsky, *Русские на Афоне. Очерк жизни и деятельности игумена священноархимандрита Макария (Сушкина)*, (Kiev, 1906). See Chapter 4 especially for details of hegumen Gerasim and hierodeacon Benedict.

For a Greek secondary source see G. Smyrnakes, *Τὸ Ἅγιον Ὄρος* (Athens, 1903), pp. 663-4.

¹⁵⁰ Uspensky, *Первое путешествие в Афонские монастыри и скиты* (Kiev, 1877). Gerasim was acting hegumen from 1821, formally elected 1830, confirmed 1833 by Constantius, who was Ecumenical Patriarch 1830-4. Gerasim was thus hegumen before ever Simonides arrived, and long after he had left. Uspensky also mentions the late hierodeacon Benedict.

¹⁵¹ Uspensky, *Указатель актов, хранящихся в обителях св. горы Афонской* (St Petersburg, 1847), p.47. The letter is dated March 6, 1833, to the Rossico monastery from the Patriarch Constantius, 'who confirms the coenobium of the Russian monastery and the election of Hieromonk Gerasim as Hegumen'.

54) Сигил. П. Константія, коимъ онъ 1833, Руск.
подтверждаетъ киновію м. Рускому Март. 6.
и избраніе Іеромонаха Герасима въ
Игумна.

«Τὰ καλῶς καὶ ὁσίως εἰς τὸ εἶναι
προεχωρητότα».

Figure 9 Uspensky's reference (published 1847) to the letter of 1833 of Ecumenical Patriarch Constantius confirming the election of Hieromonk Gerasim as Hegumen of the St Panteleimon ('Russian') monastery

The actual letter is extant in the St Panteleimon archives, and is shown below:

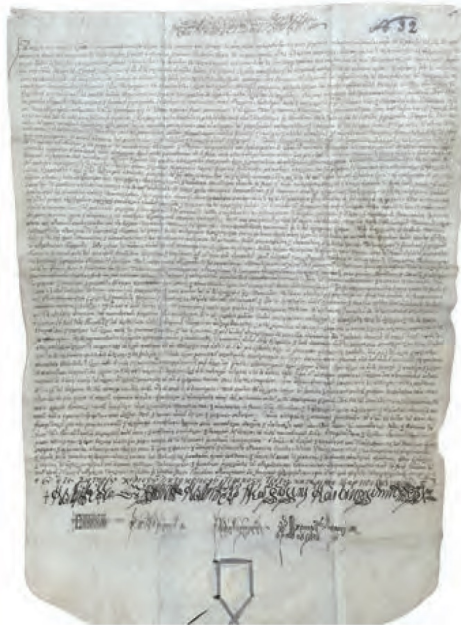


Figure 10 Letter of 1833 of Ecumenical Patriarch Constantius confirming the election of Hieromonk Gerasim as Hegumen of the St Panteleimon ('Russian') monastery

Then there is the account of monk Parfeny Ageev, who was at the Panteleimon monastery at exactly the same time as Simonides (1839-41), and wrote copious details (published in 1855) about hegumen Gerasim and hierodeacon Benedict. Parfeny twice records that Benedict was 106 years on his last appearance before his death,¹⁵² and thus Benedict was about 90 years the senior of Simonides'.

¹⁵² It is Benedict's own testimony to his age that Parfeny records (*op. cit.*). It is confirmed by the Panteleimon monastery itself, which gives his age at death as 106, *Русскій Аѳонскій отечникъ XIX–XX вѣковъ*, (2012), Vol. 1, p.53.

Living in the St Panteleimon monastery appears to have favoured longevity: hegumen Gerasim, hegumen Savva (his immediate predecessor), and hierodeacon Benedict were all centenarians. Uspensky noted the same at St Catherine's monastery in Sinai: 'From the abstemious life, with good climate, the Sinaites are all healthy, strong, and live to a very old age, namely, to 100 years or more.'

tale that Benedict was his mother's brother was thus patent nonsense,¹⁵³ and the alleged family relationship was in any case contradicted by many witnesses.

It is transparently obvious why Simonides would switch the identity of the hegumen: it was to put his readers off the scent and create an artificial barrier to investigation: because Benedict had been dead for over 20 years, he was unavailable for comment. Simonides is very careful never to let slip the name of the actual hegumen when he was at Mount Athos, Gerasim, who was still alive and would bear witness to the *falsity* of his statements. In a subsequent letter to *The Guardian* (January 21, 1863) Simonides dug himself deeper into this hole by stating that 'all the heads of the monastery' approved of the scheme:

But Benedict, as well as the principals of the monastery, wishing to recognize with gratitude the munificence of the Emperor Nicholas...decided that a transcript of the Sacred Scriptures should be made in the ancient style, and presented as a gift for the Emperor Nicholas, and he found that all the heads of the monastery perfectly agreed with him. Accordingly, having again revised the books ready for publication, and first Genesis, he gave it to me to transcribe.

As for Dr Cooper's claim (following Simonides) that the Codex was commissioned as 'a gift to Tsar Nicholas I of Russia in appreciation for his many kindnesses toward the Mount Athos monastery' (p.29), we should be interested to learn what these 'many kindnesses' and munificence were, for there had certainly been no gifts from the Tsars during the nineteenth century, and the Panteleimon monastery knew nothing about them. All ties to Russia had been cut long before the accession of Nicholas I in 1825, at which date not a single Russian had been admitted to the monastery for 90 years, and there was the greatest danger from the Turkish authorities in control of Mount Athos in accepting Russian funds.¹⁵⁴ Additionally, there was a great deal of resistance internally among the Greek monks to 'Russification' of any kind, including accepting gifts from Russia. Some Russians were admitted during the 1830s, but due to difficulties were asked to leave again, and not re-admitted until November 1839, the same month that Simonides arrived. The monastery itself did not agree to accept alms from Russia until 1841,¹⁵⁵ and sent

¹⁵³ The *Biographical Memoir*, which is based almost entirely on Simonides' tales, states that in 1840 'Benedict was an old man of seventy', i.e. the account subtracts 36 years from Benedict's real age to make the problem less acute. In fact, it is recorded that both Benedict and Prokopios Dendrinis at the St Panteleimon monastery were trained at the Athoniada Academy on Mount Athos in the mid-1750s, which requires that Benedict was born no later than the 1730s, which is consistent with his being 106 in 1840.

¹⁵⁴ Mount Athos remained under Ottoman rule until well into the 20th century: the Turks were not driven out of Athos by the Greeks until November 2, 1912.

¹⁵⁵ Hieromonk Arseny was sent from the monastery to Russia with the relics of St Panteleimon on August 28, 1862. The monastery had been supported by the Russians until the eighteenth century, but the Ottoman authorities resisted any visits or settlement of Russians in Athos after 1735, due to the

out hieromonk Arseny in 1842 to gather support, by which time Simonides was gone.

Simonides, having spent time at the Panteleimon monastery, knew well that the monks on Mount Athos did not take *The Manchester Guardian*. But within a few months an article in the Russian journal *Православное Обозрение* ['Orthodox Review'] reproduced much of Simonides' letter of September 3, 1862, and the reaction of Tischendorf appearing in the *Allgemeine Zeitung* of December 22, 1862,¹⁵⁶ both translated into Russian.¹⁵⁷ Clearly irritated by Simonides' false account to have produced the Codex under their noses and with their full approval and authority, and to have grossly misidentified their hegumen, they responded (in Russian) to the editors of *Православное Обозрение*:¹⁵⁸

K. Simonides, weaving his fable at the far end of the world from us, probably thought that it would not reach us. Otherwise, one cannot explain his unheard-of courage. And yet, from the period he alludes to [1839-41], half of the inhabitants of that monastery that he so shamelessly slanders are alive, and all of those can confront him face-to-face before the whole world! However, perhaps he does not even care about it...

In 1839, there really was in our monastery one Konstantin Simonides, not, incidentally, a monk, but a guest. He was a poor boy, who could, of course, write Greek, but not much more. To entrust him with such a task as writing out the whole Bible, and moreover in an ancient IVth century script, which he could not even see in exemplars in our monastery (and perhaps all over the Holy Mountain), would have

Russo-Turkish hostilities of 1735-39, 1768-74, 1787-91, and 1806-1812. The 'Russico' Panteleimon monastery especially was under Ottoman suspicion of having secret relations with Russia, and it was far too dangerous to accept funds from the Russian nobility while under the jurisdiction of the Ottomans, at least until the 1840s. During the Greek revolution (1821-1829), which received succour from Russia, Turkish troops occupied the monastery, plundered its property and destroyed the premises. The monks were forced to leave, and wandered for nine years under Gerasim as acting hegumen.

¹⁵⁶ In the *Allgemeine Zeitung* article, Tischendorf made the very telling observation that the codex that Simonides claimed to have written (i.e. Codex Sinaiticus) could never have been commissioned by the Panteleimon monastery as a suitable gift for the Tsar because 'in the New Testament alone the Sinaitic text...contains many such readings which in a copy destined as a present to the orthodox emperor must appear gross heresies.' Uspensky had for years been making such warning comments about the Codex; for example on March 6, 1862 Uspensky in an interview with the Tsar and the Grand Duchess Maria Nikolaevna pointed out that 'the New Testament contained in this manuscript was rewritten from the publication of the heretic Apollinarius, the Laodicean bishop, and...it is unseemly for the emperor, as patron, defender and guardian of Orthodoxy, unsuitably to give Christian churches prints from this Testament.' Uspensky, *Книга бытия моего. Дневники и автобиографические записки* (St Petersburg, 1894-1902), Vol IV.

¹⁵⁷ Странное объявление Симонидеса о синайском кодексе и ответ Тишендорфа, in *Православное Обозрение*, 1862, IX, pp.162-166.

¹⁵⁸ Отзыв с Афона о синайской Библии. Письмо в редакцию "Православного Обозрения", по поводу объявления Симонидеса, in *Православное Обозрение*, 1863, X, pp. 362-366.

been sheer madness. Yes, in addition, Simonides' uncle, his Benedict, was not the hegumen of our monastery. But before 1839, and in that year, so after, and until now, with the blessing of God, the monastery has been run by the elder Gerasim, hegumen since 1821. And as for the hegumen Gerasim, it has never before crossed his mind, nor we trust, by the help of God, will he in future ever entertain the idea of making forged manuscripts. Benedict, who died in 1841, was neither Simonides' uncle, nor a relative, but only a compatriot.¹⁵⁹

The monks of the Panteleimon Monastery continue on through every part of Simonides account and point out that it is a tissue of lies, for example:

In 1839 and 1840, neither the elder Benedict nor any others from our monastery had any thought of bringing a gift of the blessed memory of the emperor Nicholas I on account of any grants; because this year the monastery had not yet seen any grants, and it would have been inappropriate for us to bring a gift. The first favour to our monastery rendered by the late emperor at rest with the Lord was by allowing us in 1842 to make an alms collection in Russia; but then we had no Simonides; therefore, there was nobody to make fake copies of manuscripts.

The Panteleimon monastery gives an open invitation to all readers of *Православное Обозрение* to visit them to check out the full facts, rightly emphasizing that their hegumen is the very same as in Simonides' times at the monastery, and that many of the monks who knew Simonides during his stays at the monastery were still there, and all were very willing to confirm matters in person:

We need to ask Simonides: did he know about all the tricks started (let's assume for a moment that he really started them) with his imaginary uncle Benedict and others; did he (we ask) really think that *he* was the actual hegumen of the monastery? We have already said that the hegumen was the elder Gerasim—who is hegumen to this day. If he had been cognizant of the matter, then of course Simonides would not have been allowed to write even two lines from the Bible; because what sort of hegumen would agree to promote his monastery as a perpetrator of lies and forgery and, moreover, in the eyes of the co-religionist Emperor?¹⁶⁰ Suppose he did not

¹⁵⁹ That is, a Greek. The Bishop of Pelusium (who had known Simonides both in Odessa and at the Panteleimon monastery), as well as the abbot of the neighbouring Xeropotami monastery, also confirm that Benedict was not the uncle of Simonides, and was not even related to him. The impossibility that Benedict was his mother's brother is of course evident from their ages: when Benedict was a centenarian Simonides was a teenager.

¹⁶⁰ Simonides in his letter to *The Guardian* claimed to have used as his text the Moscow edition of the Bible (which for the New Testament was *Textus Receptus*) that Benedict had collated 'with the ancient ones and cleared it of many errors'. Subsequently, Simonides specified these as three ancient copies, plus Codex Alexandrinus, and a Syriac version. He still could not have produced the text of Codex Sinaiticus from these, but what tricks was 'learned Benedict' up to tinkering with the Scriptures on behalf of the monastery? And more pointedly, in the article to which the Panteleimon monastery were responding, the argument by Tischendorf against Simonides' claimed provenance had been set out, which indicated the gross indecency of sending such a codex as a present to the Tsar as the defender

know? But Simonides himself says that the case was not secretly conducted, but solemnly and for an important purpose. In any case, one does not need to talk at length. The matter is easily resolved: 'come and see.' The hegumen from Simonides' time is still alive. And besides, there are still quite a few persons in the monastery who knew Simonides and who saw his deeds. Go to whomever you wish, and ask them!

To this we can add the brief testimony of the hegumen of the monastery of Xeropotami, neighbouring the Panteleimon monastery:

Benedict belonged to the Russian Monastery, but he was never the spiritual head of the monks...Simonides was neither his nephew, nor was he otherwise related to him...Simonides came twice to Mount Athos, in 1840 and in 1851. The last time (1851) the monks were so annoyed with his 'tripotages' [σπερμολογιων, false tales, cf. Acts 17:18 'babblings'] that they sent him away after a stay of only four months, during which he did nothing but visit some of the monasteries.¹⁶¹

These details are confirmed by Amphilochius, Bishop of Pelusium, who had known Simonides personally at the Panteleimon monastery and at Odessa¹⁶²

[T]he Countess K. Etling...with the consent of her said late brother, Alexander Sturtza, introduced [Simonides] to the Greek school in that place, as having then a slight knowledge of the rudiments of our ancient Greek language...It was there [November 1841] that I first became acquainted with Mr Simonides...But having attended... for some few months only the lessons in Odessa, he was expelled from the school in consequence of his disorderly conduct, and for that same reason the Countess Etling and her brother, A. Sturtza, withdrew from him patronage, and subsequently Mr Simonides departed to Moscow.

About the year 1843, I...proceeded to the holy Mount Athos, and there entered the sacred Russian convent; and making particular enquiries there respecting Mr Simonides, I was informed that he had indeed lived there, but had been dismissed in consequence of his disorderly and scandalous conduct, and that he had no relationship with the Reverend Benedict, excepting only that he was a fellow-countryman.

...Mr Simonides came [to the Panteleimon monastery], a second time [1851]... and I, reminding him of the words which he had spoken to me in Odessa...found him...engrossed by quite contrary ideas. As, however, our Hegoumenos [Gerasim] would not allow him access to the library of our monastery, he went away to other

of Orthodoxy, since due to the thousands of changes from the *Textus Receptus*, the resulting text of Codex Sinaiticus would appear to the Tsar as promoting 'gross heresies', which could not but reflect very badly on the monastery.

¹⁶¹ Translated and forwarded by Richard Wilkinson, Her Britannic Majesty's Consul at Salonika.

¹⁶² Letter of Amphilochius, Bishop of Pelusium, Alexandria, October 5, 1863, to Edwin J. Davies H.B.M. Consular Chaplain, Alexandria.

monasteries on the holy mountain, that he might examine their libraries, but as in some of the said monasteries he mutilated many manuscript books, wickedly tearing out of them entire sheets,¹⁶³ the entrance to many of the said monasteries was forbidden him, and thus he departed from the holy mountain with disgrace.

Simonides modified his story as time went on as gaps and discrepancies inevitably began to appear. In earlier accounts he first arrived at the Panteleimon monastery in November 1839 just turning 15 years of age, unfamiliar and inexperienced with uncial writing, and it was some time before he even 'began to practise the principles of calligraphy', and necessarily some time later before he set to writing the Codex, departing from Mount Athos in November 1840 (according to his account). It was of course pointed out that he would have had only a few months to copy a whole Bible, having consumed several months learning the skill and practising. Being made aware of the problem, he stretched the duration of writing the codex from 6 months to 20 months: he was now 19 when he arrived in 1839 and this was his *fifth* visit (having first arrived in 1837); he was already fully competent in calligraphy and the writing of the codex was underway 'after a few days'. In his original account he mentioned going to Mount Sinai once, in 1852. In *The Guardian* on March 11, 1863 he said that he was 'at Mount Sinai, not once but twice or thrice', keeping his options open. On June 17, 1863 in *The Guardian* he spoke of 'my three visits to Mt. Sinai'. When enquiries were made to St Catherine's monastery it was affirmed that Simonides had never once visited. Simonides then claimed that he had travelled in disguise as a monk named Sophronius on 'political' business.¹⁶⁴

Because Simonides had never in reality been to St Catherine's monastery he was obliged to make up many details, which would eventually prove to be his undoing. For example, he has two different librarians between his supposed visits in 1844 and 1852 (Simonides has the first librarian mortally ill at the time of Tischendorf's first visit in 1844, as the explanation of how Tischendorf made away with the 43 leaves). In reality the same librarian, Kyrillos, was in post from 1841 to 1858, and he was not unwell when Tischendorf was there.

Likewise, if we take the later part of Simonides original account, and his 'corrected' version in *The Guardian* (August 26, 1863), it is clear that in his scheme the Codex was sitting on a shelf in the rare manuscript library:

¹⁶³ One of those was a manuscript of The Shepherd of Hermas in Greek. Simonides made a transcription, ripped out three leaves from the old manuscript, and then sold both in Leipzig in 1855-6. The manuscript was catalogued at Mount Athos later in the nineteenth century, noting that the three leaves were missing.

¹⁶⁴ Nobody gained entrance without correct letters of introduction, so did the Archbishop of Sinai give him false papers on three occasions? We think not. His claimed visits are inventions.

And twice I have seen it myself in the Library of Sinai, first in 1844 and then in 1852...and replaced the book in its original place, and commenced my philological investigations (for there were in that library many valuable manuscripts) and pursuing them with diligence I discovered many things of great importance.

We know from multiple sources (Uspensky being one, see above) that Codex Sinaiticus was not in the main libraries, either the general library or the rare manuscripts library, but was kept securely in the rooms of the superiors.



Figure 11 Simonides at the time of the Sinaiticus affair (signature bottom right)

Simonides is caught out again by Uspensky's detailed evidence. Simonides claimed that on his visits in 1844 and 1852 he had examined the Codex and that 'the Pentateuch was still there' within its pages:

Tischendorf speaks falsely if he says that he did not see the Pentateuch, for the Old and New Testaments were all contained in one volume. I saw them in safe preservation when I was at the monastery in March, 1844, a little before Tischendorf's arrival. And, when I was there a second time (in 1852), I again saw my manuscript...[and] the Pentateuch was still there — all right; the proof of which is, that I took a tracing from it, of four pages, containing the acrostichs...¹⁶⁵

¹⁶⁵ Simonides' letter to *The Literary Churchman*, February 2, 1863.

But Uspensky was unquestionably at St Catherine's in 1845 and 1850 and he studied Codex Sinaiticus on both occasions, and published his results in 1856 and 1857. The Pentateuch was certainly *not* there then:

The first manuscript, containing the Old Testament, which is incomplete [*author's footnote*: other than the books of Tobit, Judith and Maccabees, all other historical descriptions have been lost, as well as the prophecies of Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea and Amos], and the entire New Testament with the epistle of the Apostle Barnabas and the book of Hermas...The historical part of the Old Testament books finishes with the books of Tobit, Judith, and Maccabees, followed by the Prophets, and then Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, the Wisdom of Solomon, the Book of Sirach, and Job. Then the New Testament itself starts without any introduction. First written are the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, then the epistles of the Apostle Paul to the Romans, two to the Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, two to the Thessalonians, and to the Hebrews, then his messages to Timothy, two, to Titus,¹⁶⁶ and the epistle to Philemon; then follow the Acts of the Apostles, all the canonical epistles in our order, and the Apocalypse. But at the end are placed the epistle of Barnabas the Apostle and the book of Hermas under the name *poimen*, i.e. the Shepherd.¹⁶⁷

With cunning psychology, Simonides often provided intricate details knowing that liars are suspected when vague, and that many persons impute precision as accuracy.¹⁶⁸ But the accomplished liar who provides precise details runs a greater risk of eventual exposure when the real facts emerge. Accordingly, on genuine evidence by Uspensky, Simonides becomes trapped in the web of his own deceit. Simonides had earlier stated that he had placed an acrostic on the page containing Genesis 24, and that in 1852 he had taken a tracing from this page at St Catherine's showing the acrostic. He displayed this traced page at a meeting in England. His 'correspondent' Kallinikos (actually Simonides himself, see below) even tells us what the acrostic read, for he claims to have seen this acrostic himself 'several times' at St Catherine's, which he had (supposedly) first seen Simonides writing at Mt Athos in February 1840.

¹⁶⁶ Clearly a printing error here: the Russian printed text has 'his messages to Timothy, two to Titus, and the...'

¹⁶⁷ Uspensky, *Первое путешествие в Синайский монастырь в 1845 году* (St Petersburg, 1856), pp.226-7.

¹⁶⁸ 'The verisimilitude of Simonides' universe increases under the pretence of ordering and classifying information. The more elaborate and technical his taxonomies, the more fictitious they get...The more dry, technical and exhaustive Simonides' arrangement of dates and names, the less obvious their possible imaginary origin. Simonidean taxonomies operate as anti-taxonomies: they seemingly organise valid and certain knowledge, whereas in reality they unleash and energise a novel, in disorderly and uncategorizable creativity.' Niketas Siniosoglou, *Constantine Simonides and Philosophy*, in *Die getäuschte Wissenschaft: Ein Genie betrügt Europa – Konstantinos Simonides* (2017), pp.60-1.

We have seen from Uspensky's evidence that the Pentateuch was not present, but more than this, the only fragments from the Pentateuch known before 1975 were from the leaf containing Genesis 24 and a leaf from Numbers, and Uspensky had parts of both these leaves. Uspensky removed a large fragment of the leaf containing Genesis 24 on his 1845 visit; it was in Uspensky's possession thereafter and he published a colour plate showing part of that fragment in 1857. Thus by 1852, two years after Uspensky's second and last visit to St Catherine's, a large fragment of that Genesis 24 leaf was well away from St Catherine's monastery and safely in Uspensky's private collection. This would make it impossible for Simonides to make a tracing of that page at St Catherine's in 1852 as he claimed. Therefore that leaf allegedly containing the acrostic was *not* there 'all right'. This, of course, also means that the alleged tracing of the page was a forgery as well—one of the many thousands done by Simonides over the years, as it happens.

Such errors of fact prove not only that Simonides was telling a pack of lies, but also that he and his claimed supporting witness, Kallinikos, were one and the same person. Simonides was creating false witnesses as well as playing the part of a false witness himself. He was to do the same over the Epistle of Barnabas, as we shall see.

In his letter to *The Guardian* Simonides had invited a challenge on the matter of marks that he alleged he had made on the Codex. As Madan recounts:

Simonides asserted, not only that he had written it, but that, in view of the probable scepticism of scholars, he had placed certain private signs on particular leaves of the codex. When pressed to specify these marks, he gave a list of the leaves on which were to be found his initials or other monogram. The test was a fair one, and the MS., which was at St. Petersburg, was carefully inspected. Every leaf designated by Simonides was found to be imperfect at the part where the mark was to have been found. Deliberate mutilation by an enemy, said his friends. But many thought that the wily Greek had acquired through private friends a note of some imperfect leaves in the MS., and had made unscrupulous use of the information.¹⁶⁹

Simonides remained in England during 1858–65 and had no opportunity to examine the Codex after Tischendorf had removed it from Egypt in 1859. Therefore, finding missing pieces of parchment when checking every location listed by Simonides unquestionably suggested foul play. But whose? That Simonides was merely a good guesser can be discounted, and therefore, as Madan suggests, he knew the locations to specify *either* because he knew them from having defined them (i.e. he wrote the manuscript), so someone had taken scissors to the manuscript to remove evidence—the line that Dr Cooper takes—or because he was informed of them, perhaps even

¹⁶⁹ F. Madan, *Books in Manuscript* (1893).

with photographic evidence.¹⁷⁰ To be covertly supplied with the list of locations or photographic images merely suggests foul play of a different kind by a different party. It is then a question of determining whose foul play is the more likely.

Although Madan is clearly aware of these two possibilities, the force of this does not appear to have settled on those who take the view that Simonides ran his story to be spiteful towards Tischendorf, i.e. it was a personal matter and he acted alone. Such are J.K. Elliott and most scholars, and because they do not properly resolve this phenomenon by taking the matter to its logical conclusion, they are leaving the field open to the likes of Dr Cooper and David W. Daniels to promote their conspiracy theories. Clearly, Simonides was either aware from his own resources or he was *made* aware of the relevant places on the manuscript. If he was not aware from his own resources (because he did not write the manuscript, as all who have properly investigated the matter agree), then he *must* have been made aware. He was thus not acting alone. But in this he had form: Simonides had willingly indulged in foul play against Jonas King, Alexandros Rangavis and others in the 1840s at the behest of powerful political interest groups. Now with more experience, and having spent time in custody and in jail for such actions, he would be careful to put his libellous comments into the writing of an imaginary eyewitness correspondent, whilst playing on his international reputation as the world's most accomplished forger to persuade some that he had the capability to pull off writing such a codex.

From 1862 to 1869 the codex was secure in a fireproof safe in the custody of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. If we merely consider the possibility that Simonides' tale was a small but important part of a disinformation campaign by the Russian government towards the English, then we can understand the ease with which the Russian government could supply to Simonides the very locations of missing parchment that he would need to cite, together with photographic evidence as required. The external evidence why this was the case will be presented in a subsequent monograph as this is beyond the scope of this review.

¹⁷⁰ The possibility that he was aware by having seen Codex Sinaiticus himself in 1852 (as he claimed) can be eliminated on several grounds. Firstly, there is no evidence that Simonides ever went to St Catherine's: the testimony of several who were either at St Catherine's or in Alexandria in 1852 (when he was seen) was that he did not visit Sinai. Secondly, we know from Uspensky that the Codex was under lock and key in the rooms of the superiors, and the *skeuophylax* (sacristan) was given a charge to be careful. Tischendorf himself did not see it for that reason in 1853. Thirdly, Simonides states that he saw the Codex in the library and asked the librarian about it. Even if Simonides had been admitted to the rare manuscript library (which would have been unlikely), we know that the Codex was not to be found there.

Kallinikos

Into the controversy that Simonides stoked in the English press appeared his supposed correspondent Kallinikos. This Kallinikos states that he witnessed Simonides writing the manuscript at the Panteleimon Monastery on Mt Athos in 1840, and that he witnessed Tischendorf making off with part of the Codex in 1844 at St Catherine's monastery, and mutilating the remainder there in 1859. How remarkable that he should be in exactly the right place at the right time! Dr Cooper, with others, views Kallinikos as corroborating Simonides' account.¹⁷¹ But it is not

¹⁷¹ Dr Cooper's evidence demonstrates only that there was a lay monk called Kallinikos in the Panteleimon monastery sometime in the later nineteenth century. We do not doubt it, as the name is very common: Simonides himself states (*The Guardian*, June 17, 1863), 'The name is not an unusual one...and there are several of that name in Mt. Athos'. But the evidence does not establish that a Kallinkos at the Panteleimon monastery was Kallinikos the correspondent to *The Guardian*, nor that he was there at the same time as Simonides (both of which Dr Cooper claims).

Dr Cooper's source for the existence of a Kallinikos at the Panteleimon monastery is the Lambros Catalogue, which has entries for works written by Καλλινίκος μοναχός. But this proves too much. Dr Cooper states (p.40), 'The term Καλλινίκου μοναχού [of Kallinikos the monk] is of much interest, because it is the same term by which Kallinikos himself signs his letters to Simonides and those he wrote in support of Simonides to the newspapers – Καλλινίκος μοναχός, Kallinikos the monk.' Dr Cooper could hardly be more wrong: the letters are signed + Καλλινίκος ἱερομοναχός, which connotes a clergyman, a monk ordained as a priest whereas Καλλινίκος μοναχός connotes an unordained layman, as most monks were (the apparent exception is in a letter appearing in *The Guardian* of November 11, 1863, which has a different translator, who has unusually transliterated the name as Callinikus and incorrectly translated ἱερομοναχός as 'the Monk'. This translator also translates second person singular as 'thou', 'thee' and 'thy'). Dr Cooper appears to have overlooked that all the signatures on letters to Simonides are preceded by a cross symbol, which at that time customarily denoted high ecclesiastical office (bishop or archbishop). Spyridon Lambros, himself a Greek, a professor of history, and sometime Prime Minister of Greece, was not so ignorant as to refer to a ἱερομοναχός, a clergyman, as a μοναχός, a layman. We note that, for example, Benedict correctly appears in his catalogue as ἱεροδιακόνος: a monk ordained a deacon (Dr Cooper translates this as 'archdeacon', which is most incorrect), and even a cursory inspection of his catalogue shows that authors and copyists who are a ἱερομοναχός and distinguished from those who are a μοναχός. Two of the works in the Lambros catalogue by Kallinikos (6406 and 6407) are mere copies of a work copied by Simonides of 1841 (6405), and we are not given the date of the copying. However, another of the works by the lay monk Kallinikos, who describes himself as 'the least of the monks of the Russikon coenobium', was done in March 1867, which is 26 years after Simonides left the monastery, so hardly establishes contemporaneity, and he is not said to be a ἱερομοναχός. A fourth work is an undated book 'written by the hand of the monk [μοναχός] Kallinikos and [the hand] of the monk Simeon of Samos', which has no evident association with Simonides or to the Panteleimon monastery (it being merely on their bookshelves). Accordingly, the Lambros catalogue gives no support for Simonides' correspondent Καλλινίκος ἱερομοναχός being at the Panteleimon monastery, nor even of a lay monk named Καλλινίκος being there at the same time as Simonides.

But we can go further. One unintended consequence of Simonides' having invented a whole back story for his correspondent is that it closes off the possibility that Kallinikos was an unordained monk, a μοναχός, at Mt Athos when Simonides knew him, and was ordained a ἱερομοναχός later when Simonides corresponded with him, i.e. a monk who became a priest. Simonides claimed (*The Guardian*, June 17, 1863) that he was an ordained priest who took up arms in the Greek Revolution (1821-30), was thereby disqualified from public priestly duties thereafter, and so entered Mount Athos, i.e. he was a priest who became a monk, hence a hieromonk, and 'he spent a long time in a

difficult to demonstrate that it is *the lies* of Simonides that he is corroborating, and that this Kallinikos was not an independent witness. For example in a letter to *The Guardian* in December 1862 Kallinikos wrote

For I myself saw him [i.e. Simonides] with my own eyes, in February, 1840, writing it in Athos; and owing to the death of the head of the monastery, he left the work unfinished, and went to Constantinople, taking the Codex with him.¹⁷²

This is just parroting what Simonides had written. But as we have seen, and is historically verifiable, the Panteleimon monastery had the same hegumen (Gerasim) from 1821 (or, if one prefers, 1832, the date of his confirmation) until 1875, so there was certainly no 'death of the head of the monastery' in 1840. The falsity supports the identity switch invented by Simonides, so the collusion becomes evident, and the credibility of this witness is shattered. Many other examples can be multiplied, and will be given elsewhere.¹⁷³ Simonides invented this 'Hieromonk Kallinikos of Thessaloniki' to concoct false biographical material about himself, and for seven rather scrappy lithographed manuscripts (i.e. not typeset) that Kallinikos

monastery at Mt. Athos, where I made his acquaintance'. He was thus a hieromonk before Simonides ever knew him (according to his story). This demonstrates that the Καλλινίκος μοναχός listed in the Lambros catalogue (a layman) is *not* the same person as Καλλινίκος ἱερομοναχός (a clergyman) of Simonides' imagination.

Additionally, although Simonides invented a scrappy, shaky cursive style for his Kallinikos as an 'old man ready to die' to differentiate it from his own, but which would fool no trained graphologist, he also made some mistakes. Simonides had two brothers, at least one in Alexandria, so could send packets to them with enclosures of letters written in the name of Kallinikos for them to post back to him, thus attracting the appropriate postmarks. At least once he mistakenly enclosed a letter to himself purportedly from Kallinikos but with the envelope addressed in his (Simonides') usual hand and without changing to a different source of paper.

¹⁷² February 1840 to be specific, which would be three months after Simonides arrived as a youth of just 15, with a bare ability to write Greek. To believe that the monastic authorities would put such a lad, who within two years was pushed out for bad behaviour, on a job of copying the whole Bible in the style of the fourth century for a present for the Tsar of Russia is simply incredible.

¹⁷³ For example, (i) Kallinikos has 'the keeper of the treasures', i.e. the sacristan, at St Catherine's in July 1845 called Gabriel. Simonides would not have known his name, so he invented one. In fact, the sacristan was Vitalius, who had been appointed following the death of the former sacristan in 1843 and remained in post until after Tischendorf's 1859 visit. (ii) Kallinikos writes of Benedict as Simonides' uncle, mimicking Simonides' falsehood. (iii) Kallinikos states that the librarian died of a fever shortly after Tischendorf's 1844 visit, and Simonides refers to different librarians between his (imaginary) 1844 and 1852 visits. However, the same librarian, Kyrillos, was in post from 1841 to 1858. (iv) Kallinikos, like Simonides, has the Codex on a shelf 'in the common library', when it was in the locked room of the steward, etc etc. These and many other matters show that Kallinikos is Simonides under another name because he is simply repeating the very same inventions. Simonides, of course, knew that it would be difficult for English readers to discover otherwise. However, believing that Kallinikos had an independent existence from Simonides and was a genuine witness is inexcusable with all the extant materials available over 160 years later.

supposedly published in Russia in 1853-4,¹⁷⁴ in which Simonides is portrayed as 'Doctor of Philosophy and Knight', and as Farrer states,

Kallinikos is said to have had lithographed at Moscow in 1853 and at Odessa in 1854 certain letters between himself and Simonides and the patriarch Constantius, wherein repeated allusion is made to the Codex prepared by Simonides for the Czar.¹⁷⁵

Two of the lithographs purport to be letters by Simonides from Mt Sinai in April 1852 (during one of Simonides' three fictitious visits). Because these are simply manuscript lithographs and not typeset printed they could have been created any time anywhere, and the evidence indicates that they were forged between October 1862 and March 1863.

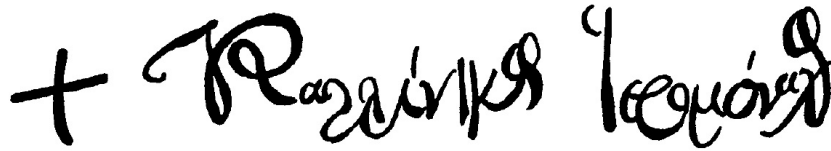


Figure 12 Simonides' signature for his alias Καλλίνικος Ἱερομόναχος

Kallinkos was very useful to corroborate Simonides' tales, and invent a false back story for him, and of course Simonides could (and did) put libellous comments under his name: he had learned a hard lesson that affixing one's own name to diabolical lies about living persons as though an eyewitness, as he had done to Jonas King and others in Athens in the 1840s, could land one with some 'unfavourable results'. But Kallinikos, his invented correspondent, was conveniently always on the move all over Africa, Asia and Europe and could never be traced, and thus could say whatever he liked, pretending to be an eyewitness. Simonides made appeal to the importance of Hieromonk Kallinikos of Thessaloniki as an witness, and used his imaginary Kallinikos not only to accuse Tischendorf of being a thief, and stupid, and unable to read Greek (!), but also to declare as a supposed eyewitness that 'with inconceivable recklessness, he mutilated and tampered with [the Codex], according to his liking, in the year 1859. Some of the leaves he destroyed', and that he used 'a solution of herbs' to fade the ink. In one of these Kallinikos letters we see the familiar tone of Simonides against Jonas King being repeated, this time against Tischendorf:

That master and pupil of all guile, and all wickedness, the German Tischendorf...deceives the world by his reputation...Now it is thy business [i.e. Simonides'] to prove and proclaim the man's real character, and to show how different it is from what it appears to be.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁴ ἐκδίδονται αὐτογραφία ὑπὸ Καλλινίκου Ἱερομονάχου τοῦ Θεσσαλονικέως.

¹⁷⁵ J.A. Farrer, *Literary Forgeries* (London, 1907), p.62.

¹⁷⁶ Letter purporting to be from Kallinikos to Simonides, November 9, 1861.

Here Simonides, through Kallinikos, is indulging in self-justification, justifying his attacks on Tischendorf as though at the instigation and encouragement of the holy man Kallinikos (i.e. himself). It is very regrettable that Dr Cooper has been taken in by the deceptions of Simonides, and thus repeats the libels.

The Shepherd of Hermas and the Epistle of Barnabas

Dr Cooper has a chapter each on the Epistle of Barnabas and The Shepherd of Hermas, which books follow the New Testament in Codex Sinaiticus. Likewise, the two books feature in two of his seven 'killer' points in his conclusion ('Any one' of which, he states, 'would be damning enough proof on its own' that 'Codex Sinaiticus is a fake'). Therefore we examine these in some detail.

Dr Cooper makes two main points concerning these writings. Firstly, that both these texts reflect Greek and Latin influences of later than the mid-fourth century; from this Dr Cooper infers that since they are not in 'Classical' Greek then they must be in 'modern Greek', hence of 'comparatively recent origin...19th-century'; this 'bipolar' inference to such a late origin is unsafe. Secondly, that since Greek texts of these books appear in Codex Sinaiticus, and Simonides produced similar Greek texts of both these books before Tischendorf produced facsimile copies from the Codex,¹⁷⁷ Simonides must therefore have produced them in that Codex. This inference is absurdly fallacious.

With regard to language, Dr Cooper quotes Sir James Donaldson at length, who argues philologically that in respect of The Shepherd of Hermas,

[T]he only conclusion to which we can come is, that the Greek is not the Greek of the at least first five centuries of the Christian era...Then there is a considerable number of passages preserved to us in Greek by Origen and other writers. The Sinaitic Greek differs often from this Greek, and agrees with the Latin translation, especially the Palatine.¹⁷⁸

Dr Cooper picks elsewhere up on philological references to 'late Latin' as though this implied influences up to the late mediaeval period, whereas 'late Latin' is a descriptor for Latin of between the third and sixth centuries: the aforementioned fifth century Palatine Latin translation was 'late Latin'. Accordingly, a 'late Latin' influence cannot, of itself, push the dating beyond the sixth century. Yet Dr Cooper states (p.51) that both Hermas and Barnabas have

¹⁷⁷ Overlooking for now that the premise is incorrect with regard to Barnabas, since Simonides used the text from Sinaiticus for his Barnabas and then produced an edition backdated to 1843.

¹⁷⁸ J. Donaldson, *A Critical History of Christian Literature and Doctrine: The Apostolical Fathers* (London, 1864).

Words, phrases and grammar...from a late Latin recension...which belies any possibility whatsoever of a pre-modern date for the composition of Sinaiticus.

In another work (not referred to by Dr Cooper) Donaldson adds further commentary:

Putting all these circumstances together, we think that the best solution of the problem is to suppose that we have, as the basis of our present Greek manuscripts, a recension...belonging to the sixth or seventh century...It has much more to do with the date of the Sinaitic Codex, and the evidence points to a strong confirmation of Hilgenfeld's opinion that the Codex is not earlier than the sixth century.¹⁷⁹

If Donaldson is correct on these points, then as the Palatine Latin translation is fifth century and the Greek may be post-fifth century then a *sixth century* production of Codex Sinaiticus is consistent with these findings. This aligns with Uspensky's mature view that the Codex is a sixth century copy of a fourth century exemplar of the New Testament. Added to this, then, were contemporary (sixth century) recensions of Hermas and Barnabas with Latin influences from the fifth century. None of this points to a nineteenth century production.

Dr Cooper, however, insists that because the text is not typical ancient Greek from the Classical period, the text must be 'modern Greek' (pp.42, 105), such that the Greek texts are productions of 'modern times' (p.43). For convenience, the fall of Constantinople in 1453 is generally taken as the beginning of 'modern Greek', which also aligns fairly well with the historical concept of the 'modern' period. Thus Dr Cooper is insisting that the philological evidence supports a dating for Sinaiticus at least a thousand years later than the mid-fourth century to which it is commonly ascribed, but this is going far beyond the careful measured conclusion of Donaldson that the evidence of philology merely supports a post-*fifth* century date.

Dr Cooper makes much of 'emendations'. Given that until the mid-nineteenth century there was no critical edition containing the first chapters of Barnabas in Greek, but only fragmentary Greek citations that may have been corrupted or written from imperfect memory, scholars made some educated guesses about what the Greek text might originally have read, based on evidence from the translations of these books into other languages, principally Latin. When the Sinaitic text of Barnabas was discovered, some of these suggestions by scholars working back from the Latin translation were found to have been correct. Dr Cooper states (p.105)

¹⁷⁹ J. Donaldson, *The Shepherd of Hermas*, in *The Theological Review*, (1877), pp504-519.

The Codex contains a text of the Epistle of Barnabas which...complies with many of the scholarly emendations of that Latin text that had been suggested and recommended by scholars who lived and worked during the 18th and 19th centuries.

Dr Cooper obtained this information from James Donaldson, whom he quotes (p.51):

The Greek of the first four chapters and a half...contains many of the conjectural emendations previously proposed by scholars.

Dr Cooper immediately adds his commentary on Donaldson's statement, and commits a hideous fallacy:

This shows that this version of Barnabas was written under the influence of a recent scholarship – from around the 17th – 19th centuries, in other words.

That is not at all what Donaldson was saying, and it is disgraceful to twist his meaning into such an absurdity. To make a suggestion that a certain word may once have been written in a lost ancient document, based on an extant translation of it, and be shown eventually to be correct, does not imply that one exercised the slightest influence over the original writer's choice of that word.

The Shepherd of Hermas

In respect of the Greek editions of these works associated with Simonides, we first address The Shepherd of Hermas. Dr Cooper writes (p.42) that

In 1855, Simonides turned up at Leipzig University bearing a Greek text of an apocryphal work known as the *Shepherd of Hermas*. No one had ever seen a Greek text of this work before.

Readers will know by now that this assertion is false, because Codex Sinaiticus was studied in considerable detail in 1845 by Uspensky, who noted that it contained The Shepherd of Hermas; and he published that finding. Thus the great Russian scholar had seen it ten years before 1855. But more fundamentally, if no one had ever seen a Greek text of this work before 1855 then how could Simonides, a mere boy, allegedly have copied it in 1840 at Mt Athos? More particularly, if we take the accounts of Simonides (and Kallinikos, his invented correspondent) at face value then a *large number* of persons, including Orthodox patriarchs, saw the Greek version of The Shepherd of Hermas in Simonides' manuscript well before 1855.¹⁸⁰ Dr Cooper has

¹⁸⁰ Including Benedict and Dionysius at the Panteleimon monastery; the patriarchs Anthimus and Constantius, which latter was said to have referred to 'your truly valuable transcript... of the pastoral writings of Hermas'; John Prodromos 'who perused it with attention' and 'many persons' as well in 1841; presumably also Germanus, who conveyed it to Sinai; Kallinikos who saw it in several times at

here positioned himself on the horns of a dilemma, for if he chooses to believe Simonides/Kallinikos then the assertion that 'no one had ever seen a Greek text of this work' before 1855 cannot be true. Alternatively, if he will assert that 'no one had ever seen a Greek text of this work' before 1855 then it follows that Simonides/Kallinikos cannot be believed.

Back in the real world, the first time that Simonides saw a Greek copy of The Shepherd of Hermas was in 1851, on his second visit to Mt Athos. Debarred by hegumen Gerasim from entering the Panteleimon monastery library, he visited the monastery of St Gregory on Athos and there found a copy (now known as the Athous manuscript), from which he tore out and stole three leaves, and made a fair manuscript transcription of the remainder,¹⁸¹ from which he made a deliberately corrupt version to sell.¹⁸² It was with these that he turned up in Leipzig in 1855 with an interest in making some money. As Robinson tells us

Mt Athos and Mt Sinai; hieromonk Callistratus, who 'undertook the comparison of it', and who 'inspected it in the common library', plus anyone else who cared to examine it in the library, not to mention the 'two' librarians.

The 'New Finds' of 1975 have confirmed that Codex Sinaiticus once contained most, and probably all, of the book.

¹⁸¹ The whole of The Shepherd of Hermas at St Gregory was originally on ten leaves, but the last leaf was wanting when Simonides accessed the manuscript in 1851. He tore out and stole the first three leaves, leaving six remaining.

¹⁸² From the stolen leaves and the fair transcription he made of the remainder Simonides forged a deliberately inaccurate text by introducing many changes of his own (his original fair transcription shows the mark up), and translating the missing ending back from the Latin version. This was part of a plan to double his money by a double deception. He sold the three stolen leaves and his corrupted transcription to the University of Leipzig, and professors Anger and Dindorf produced a critical edition of Hermas based on his corrupted text. Simonides kept back the original transcription in order to make a forged palimpsest for sale at a later date (which work of forgery he had already started: the *Biographical Memoir* also states 'A short time before the publication of the Hermas he communicated to Lykourgus the existence of another Hermaean manuscript, preserved in palimpsests'). The forged palimpsest was intended to assume value once it was realized that the critical edition by Angers and Dindorf was based on a worthless forgery. Unfortunately for Simonides, his trickery was detected rather sooner than he expected, and the original transcription he had made at Athos, marked up with the corruptions he had introduced into the transcript he had sold, was found among his papers when he was arrested for forgery. It was from this far more authentic text that Tischendorf made his critical edition of Hermas, which appeared in Dressel's *Apostolic Fathers* in 1857. We later find that Simonides sold the unfinished palimpsest forgery to the Imperial Library in Vienna, where he arrived after he was banished from Saxony.

Inveterate liar as he was, Simonides represented his *corrupted* version as the purest one, and the original fair transcript as coming from an altogether different monastery and corrupt. The *Biographical Memoir* states, 'It may here be observed that, up to the present time two editions of Hermas have appeared from two copies of Simonides. The first is the correct one [false], which was discovered in the monastery of Gregory in Mount Athos [true of the original transcription, but then corrupted by Simonides], written by Clemens of Larissa in 1475, and first published by Anger and Dindorf at Leipsic in 1856. The second transcribed in the vernacular by Abraham of Telos in 1821 [false], and therefore corrupt, was discovered [by Simonides] in Mount Athos in the monastery of Dionysius in

[T]hat once famous forger, Constantine Simonides, had produced from Mt. Athos almost the whole of the book in a Greek text. Part of this proved to be merely his own translation of the Latin, but the larger part had actually come from a Greek manuscript. With the text taken from this manuscript however he had played extraordinary tricks, doubtless with the intention of finding a later purchaser for the true copy which he was keeping back...It took thirty years to clear up the confusion which Simonides had made, and it is with a strange interest that I myself look back to the year 1888, when I published a collation of the Athos Codex in conjunction with Professor Spyridion P. Lambros of Athens.¹⁸³

When Lambros came to examine the Athous manuscript during the compilation of his famous Athos catalogue, he confirmed that the three leaves of Hermas that Simonides had sold in Leipzig were those torn out of it by him in 1851.¹⁸⁴

Of course, the fact that the Greek texts of The Shepherd of Hermas in Codex Sinaiticus and in the Athos Codex are similar means nothing more than that they are copies of the same Greek recension. Any other alleged association is accidental or conjectural.

1851 [false], and published at Liepsic [sic] in the series of the Apostolic Fathers by Tissendorf.' Simonides simply wanted to foul Tischendorf. But not content with producing two false provenances, Simonides (via the *Biographical Memoir*) claims that 'Besides the two manuscripts of Hermas in question, which he discovered in Mount Athos, he discovered seven others, some of which are of the earliest centuries after Christ.' One could not believe a word of Simonides: truly he was a fantasist.

¹⁸³ J.A. Robinson, *Barnabas, Hermes and the Didache* (New York, 1920), p.26. The collation (Cambridge, 1888) includes much useful detail about Simonides' trickery, and has an appendix showing how Simonides constructed his Greek text by back translating and paraphrasing Latin.

¹⁸⁴ Lambros and Robinson were also able finally to confirm that the transcript that Simonides had kept back for himself and was found with his effects after his arrest (later used by Tischendorf) was taken from the Athous manuscript at the Monastery of St Gregory, in which six leaves remained of an original total of 10. This also happens to prove the falsity of the information about the so-called 'Simonides' Manuscripts' in various libraries listed in the *Biographical Memoir* (p.35), where the information could only come from Simonides himself, which records, 'Three Leaves from the Sacred Pastoral Writings of the Apostolic Father, Hermas. The whole of this manuscript consists of ten leaves [true], the seven leaves are in the hands of Simonides [false], but he has presented a faithful transcript of them [false – he deliberately corrupted it and kept the faithful one] to the Academical Library at Leipsic, which was published at Leipsic in 1856 [the edition by Anger and Dindorf, shown to be worthless because of Simonides' tampering, and his back translation from Latin into a Greek paraphrase].'

The Epistle of Barnabas

Simonides learned in mid-1859 that Codex Sinaiticus contained both the Epistle of Barnabas and the first part of The Shepherd of Hermas in Greek. From 1860 onwards Simonides started adjusting his personal history in order to prepare his claims for having written Codex Sinaiticus himself, including these books. This he did by inventing books, correspondence and fake documentation (a) to move his birth date back from 1824 to 1820 (so that he appeared older and more experienced when at Mount Athos in 1840,¹⁸⁵ and to have received his PhD aged 22); (b) to eradicate his 'long time in Russia' so that he could be back at Mount Athos again in 1843; (c) to fit in three trips to St Catherine's monastery just prior to Tischendorf's three visits; (d) to include invented revised details in publications with forged earlier dates; (e) to set up false/invented witnesses to his activities. This would involve counteracting many of the biographical details recently put out in 1859 in the *Biographical Memoir*, and

¹⁸⁵ A German publication *Neueste Ergänzungen zu sämtlichen Auflagen von Pierers Universal-Lexikon und zu jedem ähnlichen Werke* (Hahn, claimed 1855 but cannot be earlier than 1857 due to content) had listed him as a native of Syme near Rhodes in 1820, presumably over-interpreting the biographical details supplied by Dr Mordtmann in 1853, who stated that he 'comes from the island of Syme', which is not quite the same thing. Simonides' own 'canonical' account up to the end of 1862 was that he was born in Hydra in 1824. The *Biographical Review* published August 1859 states (p.2) 'Constantine L. Ph. Simonides was born in the island of Hydra, in the year 1824'. In the appendix to that work is a detailed description of the activities of Simonides' father from the outbreak of the Greek Revolution commencing 1821, in which he was wounded. 'On his recovery he returned to Syme, in 1823, and was then married to his betrothed, Maria...[and] soon after returned to Hydra, with his wife, and here their son Simonides was born, November 11th, 1824.', p.74. Since the beginning of the Greek Revolution in 1821 is a fixed date, then unless this is all a pack of lies (always possible!), Simonides was born on Hydra in 1824. He stated his age as 33 (=32 in 'English' reckoning) in Leipzig in 1856. In England in 1861 and 1862 he both stated that he was born November 11, 1824 and that he was 15 when he arrived at Athos in 1839. He appears on the UK 1861 census, living in Formby, Lancashire in the home of his Greek friend Constantine Pappa. His place of birth is given as Hydra, Greece, and his occupation is listed as 'Author of various books'. His specified age, 33 as of April 1861 however, would indicate a date of birth of 1827. The Panteleimon monastery states that he was a мальчик (a male child not completed puberty) when he arrived in 1839, almost certainly under 16, which indicates a birth date no earlier than 1824. In a letter of December 13, 1861 to *The Athenaeum* (see December 21, 1861, p.849), Simonides had written, commenting on the article of December 7 that he 'came from Syme': 'If you have any curiosity to know the place of my birth, I may tell you that I was born in the town of Hydra, in the island of Hydra, on the 11th of November, A.D. 1824.' In Simonides' 1864 work *The Periplus of Hannon*, Simonides forges a change to his birth date when directly quoting from the 1859 *Biographical Memoir* and from his 1861 letter published in *The Athenaeum*: it is now November 5, 1820, though the place of birth remains Hydra. A switch to a birth date of November 5, 1820, and on the *island of Syme*, was made in early 1863. About this time Simonides was forging correspondence with his imaginary Kallinikos, backdated to 1852-3 and supposedly lithographed in Moscow and Odessa in 1853-4, the purpose of which was to fake a visit to Mount Sinai in 1852, move his birthday back to 1820. The forged Kallinikos correspondence is seen to be in transition: the birthplace is still Hydra, but the date has become November 5, 1820. Simonides first mentions these lithographs in March 1863. Concerning these, Farrer in his *Literary Forgeries* (London, 1907) p.62 asks, 'But were these letters really lithographed in the years assigned to them in the frontispiece? May they not have been concocted by Simonides in 1863 and then antedated by ten years in order to support his claim?'. Indeed so. They were concocted between October 1862 and March 1863.

require something more sophisticated than forging a new birth certificate. Simonides had to invent plausible stories and ‘evidence’ how he could have copied Greek texts of Barnabas and Hermas into the Codex in 1840.

Hermas was relatively easy because serendipitously he himself had discovered a Greek text of Hermas on Athos in 1851, which, though somewhat different from the Sinaitic text, was from the same recension. It was doubly fortunate that the text in Sinaiticus was only the first part of the book because then no problems need arise concerning the ending, which was also missing in the manuscript that Simonides transcribed in 1851. Having brought the text to the attention of scholars at Leipzig in 1855—the first time those scholars had seen a copy of most of the book in Greek—supported by three of the leaves that he had stolen from the manuscript, many scholars (including Tischendorf) had given him the benefit of the doubt that such a manuscript had long existed on Athos. Simonides judged that this was sufficient to underpin his story that the text had been available on Athos for him to copy in 1840, but that he only wrote the first part of the book because he ran out of parchment.

But what was he to do about the Epistle of Barnabas? Two important scholarly editions of its Greek text had appeared in 1857, but were missing the first chapters. No complete Greek text of Barnabas was known by western scholars,¹⁸⁶ and Simonides had not hitherto mentioned that he had ever seen a copy. How could Simonides therefore have written Barnabas in Codex Sinaiticus, as he alleged, when no Greek text of the whole epistle was known to exist in the West before 1859, nor published until 1862?¹⁸⁷ It was solving this problem that gave rise to two ingenious forgeries, this time in printed form rather than manuscript,¹⁸⁸ and it gives us a

¹⁸⁶ Uspensky had, of course, *seen* the entire epistle of Barnabas in Greek in 1845 and 1850, and had published in 1856 that it was present in Codex Sinaiticus, but few in the West followed developments in Russian scholarship.

¹⁸⁷ The problem was that the Greek text was not publicly known from Barn. 1:1 to 5:7, except in quotations from the Church fathers. Dressel put out a critical edition of Barnabas in 1857 in his *Patrum apostolicorum opera. Textum ad fidem codicum et Graecorum et Latinorum, ineditorum copia insignium, adhibitis praestantissimis editionibus etc* (Leipzig, 1857), of which Simonides would have obtained a copy since it included Tischendorf’s Hermas and discussions concerning the text of Simonides produced with Anger and Dindorf. Dressel’s critical edition had a patchwork of Latin and Greek (the latter from the quotations of the Church Fathers) for the first few chapters, and then a complete text in Greek from 5:7 to the end (21:12), also including a Latin text for comparison. As it happened, J-P Migne also produced a critical edition of Barnabas in 1857 along similar lines, so from 1857 there was plenty available with which Simonides could dummy up a fake edition, except for the problem of the first few chapters. By 1860 Simonides also had Barnabas 1:1-5a in Greek from Codex Sinaiticus (the first column), since it appeared in Tischendorf’s *Notitia Editionis Codicis Bibliorum Sinaitici* (Leipzig, 1860), which he reports he studied in Liverpool in 1860.

¹⁸⁸ Simonides expected that the fake edition of Barnabas would undergird his story and keep it running, and he invested considerable time in preparing it. But by 1863-4 when it was to be put into effect its usefulness had largely evaporated because his deceptions had been exposed, and the newspapers and journals had moved onto other stories.

fascinating window into the lengths Simonides was to go to support his Sinaiticus narrative.

Firstly, his narrative required an exemplar of Barnabas to be available to copy on Mount Athos no later than 1840. Secondly, the exemplar's text had to be near identical to the text in Codex Sinaiticus. Accordingly, it appears very likely (see below) that Simonides had to wait until he received a transcript of the Sinaitic Barnabas text in order to finish his edition, though he could prepare much of the forged front matter in advance. Finally he produced a fake critical edition of the epistle,¹⁸⁹ described in its title as 'discovered complete in Athos in 1838 by Constantine Simonides Doctor of Philosophy, now set forth on the basis of seven ancient manuscripts at the expense and superintendence of G.D. Rodokanakis',¹⁹⁰ with a false date (1843) and false place of publication (Smyrna).¹⁹¹

The enterprise of a critical edition of Barnabas could certainly have been undertaken by someone with a doctorate, but not by Simonides in 1843, for we know that he was still struggling with Greek syntax years later in Athens, and having to ask others there to help him write. According to the *Biographical Memoir* of 1859, Simonides arrived in Odessa in November 1841 aged sixteen or seventeen, and he 'remained a long time in Russia', emerging only in mid-1846 having after gaining a PhD from the University of Moscow. Although much in this *Biographical Memoir* is spurious, it at

¹⁸⁹ K. Simonides, *Ἡ πρὸς τοὺς ἐξ Ἑβραίων πιστοὺς Ἐπιστολὴ τοῦ Ἀποστολικοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν Βαρνάβα* (Smyrna, 1843 claimed; probably England, 1863).

¹⁹⁰ Georgios D. Rodokanakis appears as the promoter who funded and superintended the production, and is allegedly the author of its three page introduction (effectively another piece of hagiography respecting Simonides) and the recipient of a letter written by Simonides about the epistle of Barnabas, also included in the edition. Rodokanakis, a Greek nationalist, who lived in Smyrna, had authored a popular novel *Ο Μεγακλής ἡ ο ατυχὴς ἔρω* in 1840, and was one of the persecutors of Rev. Jonas King from that city, which King visited in 1843 (and from where King's Greek wife came). Like Simonides, he conducted his campaign against King through the newspapers, for example see the letter of January 28, 1845 to the editors of the newspaper *Elpis* (№ 210) and signed by him, where he describes King—because he was an effective Protestant missionary—as 'wicked, immoral and repugnant to our society', and encourages the Athenians to be rid of him so that their Greek neighbours 'do not have to wait to see him trying to bite them like a serpent.' When Simonides arrived in Athens in 1846 he took the cue and threw himself into the task of forcing King out of the country by personally threatening him and his family, and stirring up murderous mobs by printing lies designed to incite violence.

It is likely that Simonides first came into contact with branches of the Rodokanakis family in Odessa in 1841, from where they operated a lucrative grain shipping business, as well as industries and banking. Theodore Rodokanakis' business was the largest merchant house in Odessa at that time.

¹⁹¹ Note the claim that it was 'discovered complete' by Simonides in 1838, the year before his *first* arrival in Athos as independently attested and according to his own accounts until at least 1860. After 1862 Simonides advanced his arrival at Athos to extend his time for writing the Codex to 20 months from his originally stated 6 months, and to make himself older and fully experienced in calligraphy. He thus later claimed that his arrival at Athos in November 1839 was his *fifth* visit to the holy mountain! This evidence in Barnabas thus points to a post-1862 production.

least made an attempt to be plausible by granting Simonides four and a half years to obtain a doctorate by the age of 21 — the desired impression to be given being that he was an exceptionally gifted and precocious pupil. However, the Barnabas edition, dated 1843, represents Simonides as *already* having a doctorate, and having travelled back to Athos from Odessa, done all the work on Barnabas, and written to Rodokanakis from Athos in June 1843 (presumably including his manuscript for publication). This completely fouls the details on the 1859 *Biographical Memoir*, as it then requires that Simonides obtained his PhD by the age of 18 and in about a year after enrolling at school in Odessa.

The ‘canonical’ account of his remaining in the Russian empire in 1843 was still being maintained by him in 1861, for he writes

I began [a certain study] first at Odessa, in 1843, at the instance of my patron, the illustrious Alexander Scarlatus Sturtza, but soon set it aside, going into the interior of Russia.¹⁹²

The date of Simonides’ arrival in Odessa in November 1841 is certainly fixed,¹⁹³ but he was exaggerating his length of stay in Odessa to paper over his being expelled for bad behaviour and having his patronage removed in 1842. However, if he had left the Russian empire in early 1843 (as required by Barnabas) little more than a year after first arriving, and instead returned to Athos, and then journeyed to Constantinople and Sinai in 1844 (as he claimed from 1863 onwards), then his ‘long time in Russia’, with all the activities he undertook there as mentioned in the *Memoir* and elsewhere, would have to be expunged. We cannot overlook the sheer implausibility of the details in the Barnabas edition, that *this particular* eighteen-year old, in the *year following* his expulsion from school in Odessa in 1842 with only rudimentary skill in reading and writing Greek, had both acquired a PhD and produced a scholarly edition of a late first century Greek epistle with critical apparatus. However, although Simonides did not have the requisite skill, experience or opportunity in 1843, undertaking such a forgery twenty years later was entirely feasible,¹⁹⁴ and he had a strong motive to do so.

Simonides wove into the front matter of Barnabas many of the details that directly supported his story (first set out in the 1860s) of having written Codex Sinaiticus,

¹⁹² C. Simonides, *Fac-Similes of Certain Portions of the Gospel of St. Matthew, and of the Epistles of Ss. James & Jude* (London, 1861), p.33.

¹⁹³ The date of his arrival in Odessa, November 1841, is certain and attested by several independent witnesses. This is a date that Simonides never sought to change when he re-wrote his personal history and we can rely upon it.

¹⁹⁴ Simonides had learned a great deal about how to make a critical edition from his association and interaction with the professors at Leipzig 1855-6, including Tischendorf, Anger and Dindorf, and he would have seen Dressel’s edition of *Hermas* and possibly Migne’s, both 1857.

pretending that he had put these details in the public domain as far back as 1843. We have it on the best authority that after he left Athos in 1841 he did not make a return visit until 1851,¹⁹⁵ but this Barnabas edition includes a letter allegedly written by Simonides to Rodokanakis from Mount Athos dated June 1843. In this fake letter Simonides set out the same details that he had incorporated into his story to *The Guardian* in September 1862:

As you know, I wrote it out for the emperor of all the Russias Nicholas the First in 1839 and 1840, and added it at the end of the New Testament as directed by my uncle.¹⁹⁶

This is echoed back with even more detail in the section 'To the Readers' purportedly written by Rodokanakis in July 1843. With regard to this epistle of Barnabas, he tells us that Simonides

had written it with capital letters on parchment, and added it at the end of a certain codex of the Holy Scriptures that was intended by his memorable uncle Benedict, the hegumen of the so-called Rossicon monastery, in Athos, to be presented to the Emperor Nicholas.¹⁹⁷

This is the same concatenation of lies that we saw Simonides used in 1862 to set up his fictional account of producing the Codex, and here he is putting them under Rodokanakis' name. Crammed into a single sentence as Simonides did in his opening letter to *The Guardian* in 1862, it is clearly 'overkill'. Some of these falsehoods were invented only after the *Biographical Memoir* of 1859.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁵ From the monasteries themselves, and from Amphilocius, who knew Simonides in Odessa when he removed to Moscow in 1842, and who was himself at Mount Athos in 1843.

¹⁹⁶ Nicholas was the reigning monarch in 1840 when the codex was allegedly written and in 1843 when Simonides allegedly wrote this letter, and reigned until his death in 1855. Considering that Nicholas was the first Tsar with that name and was still reigning in 1843, it strikes one as unusual that he would be referred to as 'the First' during his lifetime, though it became common after his decease.

¹⁹⁷ K. Simonides, *Ἡ πρὸς τοὺς ἐξ Εβραίων πιστοὺς Ἐπιστολὴ τοῦ Ἀποστολικοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν Βαρνάβα* (Smyrna, 1843 claimed; probably England, 1863).

¹⁹⁸ In 1843 Benedict had been dead only a very few years and the Greek readership around the Aegean at that time would easily be able to establish that Benedict had never been hegumen of the Rossikon monastery. He was known especially in the south Aegean as a teacher on Poros in the 1820s, and originally from Syme. This proved far more difficult to ascertain from England in the 1860s. The lie that Benedict was the hegumen of the Panteleimon monastery appears in a letter from Simonides to *The Athenaeum* (issue December 21, 1861, p.849): '[M]y late uncle...Benedict, the confidential adviser and spiritual father of John Capo-d'Istrias; and after his death, Superior of the Monastery St. Panteleimon (Rosicon), in Mount Athos'. Kapodistrias died in 1831, and, as we have proved, Gerasim was hegumen continuously from 1821 to 1875. The lie that Benedict was Simonides' uncle (mother's brother) goes back at least to 1841, however, as Amphilocius attests. It was a 'plausible lie' since both Benedict and Simonides' mother Maria hailed from Syme.

Simonides used a similar device in his invented correspondence with his imaginary Kallinikos, supposedly written and published 1852-4: he wrote letters to imaginary correspondents with the false details that he wished to establish, and his 'correspondents' wrote back echoing those details, and mentioning other matters ('as you know', 'as I told you verbally', 'as arranged' etc). The repetitive propaganda, however, is far too clumsy to arise in any normal correspondence.

Having stated in his 1862 narrative to *The Guardian* that he had made a trip to Sinai in 1852 and seen his manuscript there in a modified state, Simonides in 1863 invented an earlier trip to Sinai timed to occur just before Tischendorf's first visit in 1844, and this he weaves into Barnabas as an anticipation. Writing to Rodokanakis, he explains that the Barnabas epistle was 'a minor component (as I now recall)' and that 'I wrote it also on the transcript...the contents of which languish in the monastery of Sinai', but that when

this coming December [1843] we both pass over to Mount Sinai, as prearranged, I will show you all these things and the acrostics for your interest.

Again, this points to an 1863 date for this forged Barnabas, to align with Simonides' evolving Sinaiticus story. Perhaps because his 'Kallinikos' correspondence was not working as successfully as intended during 1863, based as it was on an imaginary character, Simonides set up a real person to act as a false witness for him, an author who had achieved some fame with a novel in 1840, who was well known in Smyrna and from a powerful family.¹⁹⁹ Had Simonides' story not run out of steam by 1864 one might have expected letters to arrive at the English press confirming that Rodokanakis was another who had seen the evidence at Mount Sinai in 1844, including Simonides' identifying acrostics, and all before Tischendorf's first visit.

Simonides claimed in this Barnabas edition that his critical text was based on seven sources, though he did not adequately identify them.²⁰⁰ Several of them refer by name to monasteries on Mt Athos, and the seven sources were 'all discovered in Athos' according to the introduction in the forged book 'review' (see below). Simonides claimed that the text of Barnabas in the Codex for the Tsar was based principally on the first manuscript discovered,²⁰¹ which he collated with the six other

¹⁹⁹ Gennadius had intelligence that Barnabas was also serving the interests of the fake 'Prince' Demetrios Rodokanakis in London. Was his relative in Smyrna being set up to assist with some fake history for that enterprise as well?

²⁰⁰ On some copies he had hand amended 'seven' to 'eight'. Most if not all are imaginary – he claimed to have collected *nine* manuscripts or transcripts of Hermas when he had only one.

²⁰¹ A manuscript written in the year 1189, which he refers to by the invented name 'Gaspereion' so that it is untraceable. If one reconstructs the 'Gaspereion' text from the critical apparatus then one has a close match with the text in Codex Sinaiticus—which is whence, of course, Simonides produced this faked 'Gaspereion' source.

manuscripts. It is clear that the Athonite book depositories did not hold any copies of Barnabas when the Lambros catalogue was compiled, so it is most unlikely that Simonides found a copy of Barnabas on Athos, and quite impossible that he found seven. During 1839-41 he had no opportunity to rummage through all the libraries to find such manuscripts. His first (and only) opportunity was in 1851, but this was too late to be copied into a codex allegedly produced in 1840.

Of course, if a critical edition of Barnabas (complete, and in Greek) really had been published in 1843 then something about it would also have appeared in the scholarly press over the following 20 years, but there is nothing. The scholars who brought out critical editions of Barnabas in the 1850s were completely unaware of it. There is no mention of it in Donaldson's 1864 edition of *The Apostolical Fathers*. Not even Simonides himself mentioned Barnabas when he arrived in Leipzig in 1855 carrying his transcriptions and stolen sheets of Hermas, and began involving himself in a critical edition of that work. Why did he not mention to professors Anger, Dindorf, Gersdorf and Tischendorf his critical edition of *Barnabas* in order to establish his credentials? To ask the question is to answer it.

There do not appear to be any reports of the existence of this critical edition of Barnabas until 1864,²⁰² when it first appears in a list of publications by Simonides in his own work *The Periplus of Hannon* (London, 1864), a list that is partly fictitious.²⁰³ The largest and most complete collection of works allegedly published by Simonides himself was assembled by Joannes Gennadius,²⁰⁴ and is housed in the Gennadius Library in Athens. Although the Gennadius Library does not currently contain a copy of Simonides' edition of Barnabas, Gennadius (who was an expert on Simonides) was familiar with the work and records the following about it:

The above 16 items are all very rare and constitute an almost complete set of the Author's publications...But it is suspected that some are imaginary publications intended to support the claims made in his forgeries. I have ascertained, for instance, that No. 7, "Ἡ πρὸς τοὺς ἐξ Ἑβραίων πιστοὺς Ἐπιστολὴ τοῦ Ἀποστολικοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν Βαρνάβα", which purported to have been issued in Smyrna in 1843, was (as the copy I saw betrayed), printed in England at about 1860 in order to support

²⁰² The alleged reference in a newspaper in Smyrna in 1843 is spurious, see below.

²⁰³ The next mention we have found is in Donaldson's *The Apostolical Fathers* (London, 1874).

²⁰⁴ A Greek, who came to live in London in the early 1860s when Simonides was in England and became a trader there. In a note to his Catalogue of 1931 he records, 'The appendix to the third section of my Catalogue of Greek classic literature gives a list of the publications of Constantine Simonides, the notorious forger of Greek MSS. (Nos. 5368-5384). That collection of seventeen items is, as far as I know, the completest extant...[Simonides] was not a profound scholar, and while his palaeographic calligraphy was admirable, the texts he invented and then clothed with his penmanship, left him open to exposure by both Greek and foreign critics. Moreover he laboured under the presumption of most adventurers in underestimating the chances of detection, or of the probabilities of the actual facts cropping up.'

certain claims of Prince Rhodocanakis...who was an intimate friend of his, and whom he has schooled in the art of inventing, in like manner, non extant publications.²⁰⁵

Because there is no genuine evidence for the existence of Simonides' Barnabas before 1864 it would have been *entirely possible* for Simonides to create a fake critical edition of Barnabas in 1863 from Tischendorf's facsimile edition of the Sinaitic Barnabas published in 1862, and then to have it privately printed in England with a fake place of publication (Smyrna) and date of publication (1843 instead of, say, 1863).²⁰⁶ In the absence of any countervailing evidence this remains the most likely explanation.

²⁰⁵ J. Gennadius, *Catalogue of Greek Classics*, Vol. 2, part 3, p.71 (1923, typescript). D.M. Nicol, *The Immortal Emperor* (Cambridge, 2002), records that Rodokanakis had 'given employment to countless forgers...[T]he wealthy Greek merchant Demetrios Rhodocanakis of Chios, who lived in London ...was tireless in the pursuit and fabrication of evidence...publishing...a whole series of spurious documents'.

²⁰⁶ Because of a lack of credible prior independent witnesses to a critical edition of Barnabas by Simonides (the alleged newspaper 'review' of 1843 was faked by Simonides, see below), and because of blatant attempts to manipulate historical details to align with the evolution of Simonides' story about the Codex, a date of creation around 1863 (subsequent to the facsimile of the Sinaitic text published by Tischendorf in late 1862) is by far the most likely.

Yet, even before seeing Tischendorf's facsimile there are other possibilities for a slightly earlier date:

(i) Theft: Since we know that Simonides ripped out and stole works from the Athos monastery libraries in 1851 (including pages of The Shepherd of Hermas) then it is possible that he then stole a copy of Barnabas, which then would not later appear in the Lambros catalogue. Alternatively, he may have stolen a copy he found elsewhere.

(ii) Transcription: Simonides may have transcribed a text he found somewhere else, since another complete Greek copy of Barnabas from the same recension as that in Sinaiticus did come to light later, discovered in 1873 by the Greek Orthodox metropolitan Philothenus Bryennios in the library of the Jerusalem Monastery of the Most Holy Sepulchre in Constantinople. This was part of a manuscript written in AD 1056. This finding proves that the Sinaitic text of Barnabas was not unique, and that a plurality of copies had been made of that particular Greek recension up to at least the eleventh century.

(iii) Intelligence from Russia: Tischendorf reports that photography was done on the Codex while it was in Cairo from as early as March 1859, and that there was pressure to produce additional photographs in St Petersburg before he removed part of the Codex to Leipzig to work on his facsimile in late 1859. What Tischendorf left in St Petersburg was then actively photographed, a number of plates of which were included in the 1862 facsimile, supplemented by photographs that Tischendorf produced in Leipzig.

A simple transcript would be sufficient as the basis for a fake critical edition. Tischendorf had taken a full transcript of Barnabas the night he had first seen it in February 1859, and there is no reason to suppose that the Russians who had funded the trip would not be put in possession of a copy of his transcript. There are grounds for believing that there was collaboration between Simonides and the Russian government, who had a motive to create a temporary distraction over the Codex *among the English*. The Russian government certainly had materials by late 1859 and 1860 that they could have copied to Simonides to support an assignment. Further details about this collaboration will be given in a separate publication (in preparation).

Interestingly, the first page containing Barnabas Q91-f2r and the following two-page spread (Q91-f.2v and Q91-f.3r) in the Codex contained the text from Barn. 1:1 up to 5:5a in 11 columns, and therefore *two photographs* from the Codex would have supplied practically all the Greek text wanting hitherto

When taken in context, this also appears to be the position of Sir James Donaldson (whom Dr Cooper is fond of quoting with approval), who dealing chronologically with all the editions of Barnabas taken from the text discovered in Codex Sinaiticus lists Tischendorf's of 1862 and 1863, Dressel's of 1863, Volkmar's of 1864, Hilgenfeld's of 1866, and Müller's of 1869, and then adds

Simonides also printed an edition of the entire text, as found in the Sinaitic, with notes; on the title-page of which the date is 1843, and the place of publication Smyrna.²⁰⁷

The implication, of course, is that Simonides used the same Sinaitic text as all the aforementioned but forged the date and place to claim priority, and obscure its real publication date.

What evidence, therefore, does Dr Cooper adduce in favour of the *genuineness* of the 1843 date and place of publication Smyrna? It is the following (p.52):

[A] local Greek newspaper of Smyrna, namely *The Star of the East* [Ὁ Ἀστὴρ τῆς Ἀνατολῆς], ran a fulsome and favourable review of Simonides' *Barnabas* in the same year of its publication, 1843, witnessing to the fact that this printing was no later invention of Simonides but a solid historical fact.

Several Greek language newspapers started up and closed down in Smyrna in the 1840s.²⁰⁸ Fortunately there are good records of them. Though the title Ὁ Ἀστὴρ τῆς Ἀνατολῆς was published and printed in Smyrna, having its first issue on October 17, 1841, it ceased publication in mid-1842, so there were certainly no 1843 editions. Neither did the title start up again, nor did a publication with the same or similar name emerge in the 1840s.²⁰⁹ Dr Cooper reproduces an image of the front page of the

(i.e. Barn. 1:1 to 5:7). Alternatively, a relatively simple transcription from only ten columns would have sufficed since Tischendorf had produced one column in facsimile in 1860.

²⁰⁷ J. Donaldson, *The Apostolical Fathers* (London, 1874), p.315. That Donaldson was aware that Simonides was a deceiver is clear from his comments concerning The Shepherd of Hermas on p.383, where he mentions 'Simonides's forging practices' and notes that Simonides had sold to the Leipzig University Library a 'copy deliberately altered by himself in many places'.

²⁰⁸ *Ἀμάλθεια* (1838- 1922), *Ἀργός* (1839-41), *Ἰωνικὴ Μέλισσα* (1839), *Ἡριγένεια* (1840-41), *Εθνικὴ* (1840-41), *Ελπίς* (1841), *Ὁ Ἀστὴρ τῆς Ἀνατολῆς* (1841-42), *Εσπερινός Κήρυξ* (1842), *Ὁ Φίλος του Λαοῦ* (1842), *Ὡρίων* (1843), *Ὁ Μελησιγενής* (1844), [*Ἀνατολικός Μηνύτωρ* (1845-47). Note: Karamanlidika, i.e. Turkish dialect printed in Greek characters], *Φιλαλήθης* (1845), *Ἀλήθεια* (1846), *Ἡ Εφημερίς της Σμύρνης* (1849), *Ἰρίς* (1851). The Greek language newspapers were suspected by the Turkish authorities as a vehicle for pan-Hellenic nationalism, Ionian independence etc, and were quickly and forcibly closed down if they detected a whiff of criticism of the Ottoman authorities or of fostering Greek nationalist aspirations.

²⁰⁹ H. Topuz, *100 [i.e. Yüz] soruda Türk basın tarihi* (Istanbul, 1973), p.89; A. Arslan, *Türkiye'de Rum Basını in Yakın dönem Türkiye araştırmaları*, Issue 3 (Istanbul, 2003), p.82; A. Arslan, *Osmanlı'dan*

first issue of *Ὁ Ἀστὴρ τῆς Ἀνατολῆς* dated October 17, 1841,²¹⁰ but this cannot of course prove that an edition was produced more than a year after that publication folded. In fact this photograph of the first issue proves too much, as we shall see.

How then does something non-existent bear witness to ‘a solid historical fact’? This shall never present a difficulty for the conspiracy theorist: Dr Cooper avers (p.54) that *the total lack of evidence anywhere* for the existence of editions of *Ὁ Ἀστὴρ τῆς Ἀνατολῆς* after May 1842 is part of ‘a massive deception’, for all the evidence has been deliberately *removed* and made to *disappear*:

But here is another strange circumstance. The issues of the *Star of the East* that are currently available for viewing date only from 17th October 1841 – 22nd May 1842, and we are left to ponder the fate of the 1843 issues, one of which would have carried the review for Simonides’ Barnabas. Who, I wonder removed them?..[T]he removal of the 1843 issues of Smyrna’s *Star of the East* is by no means the only disappearance of evidence that would have exonerated Simonides...What is involved here is a massive and concerted deception.

Would it not have been appropriate to check whether the newspaper had ceased publication before making such statements? Unsurprisingly, Dr Cooper gives no evidence whatsoever for his assertions, neither could he since no one can remove and make to disappear something that has never existed.

But Simonides had already anticipated matters. He had produced an edition of Barnabas with a fake date, and for those who might question its date and place of publication he supplied a sheet carrying a review of it purporting to come from *Ὁ Ἀστὴρ τῆς Ἀνατολῆς*, dated August 1, 1843. Dr Cooper suggests how improbable it would be for Simonides to forge a complete edition of the newspaper, and hopes thereby to dispose of the objection that what he supplied was a forgery.²¹¹ A copy of the alleged review is in the Gennadius library, and purports to be a *supplement* to the newspaper edition of No. 26, August 1, 1843. It is not even a large sheet folded as a bifolium like a newspaper, but is a single sheet, one leaf, printed on both sides. Producing *one single sheet* of this size would be a straightforward job for any decent printer. And who, after all, supplied these forged ‘reviews’ to parties interested in seeing Simonides’ Barnabas edition? Simonides.

Cumhuriyet’e Rum basını (Istanbul, 2005), p.80. For a Greek source see C.S. Solominidis, *H δημοσιογραφία στη Σμύρνη* (1821-1922), (Athens, 1959), pp.281-332.

²¹⁰ Which someone has on its face added –42 to the date so that it reads 1841–42 to make it obvious that this was the period over which that the publication ran.

²¹¹ In fact, the *whole* newspaper in question, when it ran, was only two printed sheets folded, making 8 pages in all, so would not have been any great undertaking for a printer.

But a supplement to Issue no. 26 of *Ὁ Ἀστὴρ τῆς Ανατολῆς*, dated August 1, 1843, never existed, and of that we can be certain. As is evident from the image that Dr Cooper provides in his book, the first edition of this title was on October 17, 1841, and being a weekly publication Issue 26 came out as expected on April 10, 1841. Just to be very clear about this, we exhibit below the masthead of the subsequent Issue 27 on April 17, 1842.²¹² This evidence forever closes off any glimmer of an Issue 26 in 1843.



Figure 13 Masthead of the Smyrna 'Star of the East', Issue 27, April 17, 1842

Simonides took great delight in trying to make fools of academics, and he is still making fools of those who think his forgeries are genuine, 160 years on. In this particular case, Simonides deliberately included certain clues in his forged 'review' sheet for his own merriment. Consider the following:

- (i) Simonides, most implausibly, put his initials K. Σ. at the end of the *previous* article in this fake supplement sheet immediately prior to the 'review' of his book;
- (ii) Though the weekly edition was only two bifolia, making an 8-page newspaper, which does not bear page numbering, Simonides' faked supplement sheet bears the incredible page numbers 425 and 426.²¹³

²¹² Note that the day of the month (17) and the year (1842) are given in 'Arabic' numerals. The 'review' sheet furnished by Simonides has them in Greek numerals, as was common on newspapers in Athens. This alone should raise suspicions.

²¹³ Simonides chose his fake page numbers based on the following wrong assumptions: that (i) the newspaper ran continuous consecutive numbering for each edition; and (ii) the newspaper comprised four bifolia per issue, i.e. 16 pages. The last page of Issue 26 would thus be page 416 (i.e. 26 x 16), and the 'supplement' would accordingly have page numbering slightly higher. In reality, the *Ὁ Ἀστὴρ τῆς Ανατολῆς* was an 8-page newspaper, and it did not bear any page numbering.

(iii) The weekly edition, while it ran, was produced and sold on a Friday. However, the date of Simonides' faked 'review', August 1, 1843, is for a newspaper edition produced and sold on a Sunday,²¹⁴ which is ridiculous amongst the Greek Orthodox community there and then.

(iv) The 'review' improbably refers to Simonides (who in 1843 was still a teenager with only elementary reading and writing skills who had been expelled dishonourably from school just the year before) as 'The most learned and in all things noble patriot K. Simonides, the nephew worthy of the famous Benedict, and the successor to his wisdom'. This merely showcases Simonides' fantasies.

In fact, when properly analysed, the evidence that Dr Cooper adduces weighs all the more heavily *against* an association with a genuine 1843 newspaper edition. One matter that the printer of this supplement sheet could not easily get around (and Simonides himself appears to have overlooked, though to be fair he had little experience in faking *printed* media in respect of dating) was the availability of cast moveable type. Palaeography of course applies to Greek print typefaces, which were undergoing great and rapid changes during the nineteenth century. Archive copies of *Ὁ Ἀσπὴρ τῆς Ἀνατολῆς* all appear, as expected, in Greek typeface of that period in Smyrna. By the 1860s this typeface was very dated, and it is noticeable that the alleged 'review' supplement is in a modernized more upright typeface first introduced in Western Europe, and very much higher print quality.²¹⁵ We also note the extensive use of ligatures on the 'supplement', especially of the 'stigma' (present also in the Barnabas edition) but absent in the genuine newspapers;²¹⁶ a noticeably different *kai* compendium; a different policy on diacritics (which also evolved through that century); and many other distinguishing features which speak volumes concerning provenance and dating.

It is clear by inspection and knowledge of the type alone that the 'review' sheet that Simonides flourished was *not* printed in Smyrna in 1843, but could easily have been produced by printers in England, France or Germany in the late 1850s and 1860s from their stocks of Greek type.²¹⁷ As Simonides was then in England, it was likely done there along with his critical edition of Barnabas, which work Gennadius ascertained by physical examination to have been 'printed in England at about 1860',

²¹⁴ We can be certain that Julian dating applies since otherwise all the genuine editions of the publication during 1841-2 would come out on a Sunday rather than a Friday.

²¹⁵ See K. Mastoridis, *Cutting and casting Greek types in the nineteenth and twentieth century*, in *Gutenberg Jahrbuch*, January 2006.

²¹⁶ The use of these ligatures appears to be a deliberate attempt to impart an older 'feel' to the texts.

²¹⁷ It is not, properly, a book review, but is a short hagiographic and laudatory introduction followed by verbatim reproduction of text from the book itself, including a faked letter by Simonides' to Rodokanakis from Mount Athos dated June 1843, to fill up all the space on both sides of the sheet.

though it 'purported to have been issued in Smyrna in 1843'. Gennadius would have known, for he was a Greek bibliophile among the Greek community in England and familiar with the styles, conventions, type and capabilities of printers of Greek there and abroad at that time. One other contemporary reader who received a copy of Barnabas from Simonides himself and inspected the news sheet, likewise reported that 'The paper and the print of the newspaper looked uncommonly fresh' for a production from 1843,²¹⁸ and he was not convinced that it was genuine. His instincts were entirely correct.

But as in the case with Hermas, irrespective of when Simonides produced his critical edition, if Simonides' Barnabas had a similar text to the Greek text in Codex Sinaiticus this would imply nothing more than that both are copies of the same recension. Thus, *even if* Simonides was in prior possession of a text of Barnabas from the same recension as the text in Codex Sinaiticus, Dr Cooper's conclusion (p.52) is a highly embarrassing abuse of logic:

[I]f Simonides was in possession of that text long before Tischendorf had it, then it can only have been he who wrote it into the text of Sinaiticus—which makes Sinaiticus a production of the nineteenth century, and not an ancient codex at all.

Clearly any number of copies can be taken from a given recension, and copies made of copies, so finding two similar copies from a particular Greek recension does not imply a common copyist, or contemporaneity of copying.

²¹⁸ *The Athenaeum*, January 8, 1876.

INTERNAL EVIDENCES

Codex Sinaiticus the work of several scribes

It should first be noted (and it is very telling that Dr Cooper neglects to inform his readers, preferring to remain silent on the matter) that The Shepherd of Hermas in Codex Sinaiticus is *not* written by the scribe (Scribe A) who wrote much of the New Testament plus Barnabas, whom Dr Cooper claims was Simonides. Thus Simonides' fabrications are again exposed, for he did not even write *the first part*, as he claimed:

First I copied out the Old and New Testaments, then the Epistle of Barnabas, the first part of the pastoral writings of Hermas...The transcription of the remaining Apostolic writings, however, I declined, because the supply of parchment ran short.

The portion of The Shepherd of Hermas removed by Tischendorf in 1859 is only about a third of the whole book. However, with pages discovered at St Catherine's in 1975 our view extends close to the end, and is still by the same scribe. So we have direct evidence that the scribe completed by far the greater part of Hermas, and most likely all of it (the very last part not being extant). This makes Simonides' description of his own work appear to be tailored to fit with what Tischendorf had recovered in 1859. This is an example of a deceiver being caught out by supplying information superfluous to his purpose in the interests of feigning accuracy and detail,²¹⁹ which can later be contradicted.

The whole codex was written by several scribes, and we can identify at least three on the parts that are extant. This matter of different scribes is fatal to Dr Cooper's thesis even without looking outside Codex Sinaiticus. Dr Cooper readily acknowledges the existence of at least two different scribes, Scribe A and Scribe D, since his argument for Jesuit forgery is based upon it.

²¹⁹ Simonides did this in the Jonas King affair also. His extremely detailed accounts of Protestant ceremonies, which are utterly fanciful, include details that he could not have experienced as an eyewitness. For example, in his invented description of baptisms performed by King, allegedly as an eyewitness, Simonides included detail of the taste of substances introduced into the mouth of an infant during the ceremony: 'King took a large vial, which was full of odoriferous spirits, which he poured around the baptismal font, and then lighted with fire; and he gave to the child to drink something sweet, and it immediately went to sleep...carrying the child five times swiftly around the baptismal font, and over the fire...he took the child in his arms, kissed it on the mouth, and gave it to drink something which had the taste of lemonade, and anointing its head with a color like gold, and sweet scented, he rubbed the head of the child till it awaked.' (*The Age*, July 28, 1847). This translation of Simonides' article appears in the documents submitted to the US Congress by the President of the United States, Franklin Pierce, December 12, 1854, and referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations. See Congressional Edition, Vol. 751, US Government Printing Office, 1855.

Each large sheet of parchment in the Codex was folded vertically down the middle to form a bifolium of two leaves. A quire is a nested set of four bifolia,²²⁰ comprising eight leaves, each with a recto and a verso, i.e. 16 'pages'. Now, in the centre of the quire is a folded bifolium comprising two consecutive leaves: folio 4 (recto and verso), and folio 5 (recto and verso), i.e. four consecutive 'pages'. The other conjugate leaves are folios 1 & 8, 2 & 7, and 3 & 6. It is evident that the New Testament is written by 'Scribe A', except for three entire bifolia which are by 'Scribe D' (plus some verses in Revelation). On Quire 77 the centre bifolium (folios 4 & 5) with four consecutive pages is written by scribe D and comprises Mark 14:54 – Luke 1:56.

Dr Cooper infers that the work of 'Scribe D', which does *not* contain Mark 16:9-20, was substituted for a bifolium of 'Scribe A', which *included* Mark 16:9-20. Of course, the text on the substituted bifolium had to join seamlessly where it connected to the work of 'Scribe A' before and after the substitution. The present reviewer agrees that Scribe D substituted for the previous work of Scribe A in this instance, especially as the inference is strengthened by reference to two other bifolia where substitution is certain and not conjectural.²²¹ The presence of these additional two bifolia written entirely by Scribe D greatly strengthen the case that all three bifolia are substitutes for bifolia that were originally written by Scribe A. This is not a controversial finding, for example Dirk Jongkind notes that

The New Testament, which follows upon the poetic books, is also done by scribe A's hand, except for six folios which...have been replaced by scribe D.²²²

[I]n the New Testament, scribe D replaced on three occasions a pair of leaves (forming a single sheet) within the text written by scribe A.²²³

Nearly a century earlier the explanation was the same:

The conjugate leaves written by D are clearly 'cancel leaves'; that is to say, they were written after the MS. had been completed, in order to take the place of others, written no doubt by A.²²⁴

²²⁰ Occasionally there are quires with fewer than four bifolia, i.e. fewer than 8 leaves.

²²¹ The relevant bifolia are as follows: Quire 75, folios 2 & 7, containing Matthew 16:9 – 18:12, and 24:35 – 26:6; and Quire 85, folios 3 & 6, containing 1 Thessalonians 2:14 – 4:3, and Hebrews 4:15 – 8.1. If only the Mark–Luke bifolium, Q77 folios 4 and 5, had been found, then it would be arguable (if unlikely) that Scribe A took a break, and Scribe D wrote four consecutive pages, whereupon Scribe A picked up the work again. But the presence in other quires of bifolia written entirely by Scribe D that are not folios 4 and 5 in those quires, and thus not consecutive leaves, makes such a suggestion extremely improbable.

²²² D. Jongkind, *One Codex, Three Scribes, and many Books: Struggles with Space in Codex Sinaiticus*, in *New Testament Manuscripts Their Texts and Their World*, ed. Kraus & Nicklas, (Leiden, 2006), pp124-5.

²²³ D. Jongkind, *Studies in the Scribal Habits of Codex Sinaiticus*, PhD thesis (2005).

Having acknowledged the existence of 'Scribe D',²²⁵ Dr Cooper will find his thesis in profound difficulty when he examines the Old Testament. There we find instances where Scribe A carried on where Scribe D left off, and places where Scribe D carried on where Scribe A left off, and evidence of this found *on the same folio*. There is no folio replacement going on there, as in the case with the New Testament, and no amount of Jesuit forgery could accomplish this. When one scribe continued the work of the other scribe in the Old Testament, they either started a new column on the same page (when starting a new book, for example), or, when part way through a book, switched discretely at a page turn, which behaviour is instanced *on the same folio*. In 4 Maccabees, Scribe D wrote up to chapter 8:7a, finishing on the recto page Q42-f.4r.²²⁶ Then on the verso of *the same folio* Scribe A continued the text from 8:7b, and carried on to the end at 18:24. We have a similar example with Psalms: Scribe D wrote the Psalms up to 97:3a, finishing on Q62-f3 recto. Turning over to the verso of *the same folio*, the text continues from 97:3b to the end of the Psalms in the hand of Scribe A. Because the continuations are *on the same folios*, clearly Scribe A carried on where Scribe D left off, i.e. A wrote his part *after* D, and therefore saw D's work.²²⁷ Therefore from the reliable premises that Scribe A wrote the end of Mark *before* Scribe D re-wrote it, and that Scribe A wrote the ends of 4 Maccabees and Psalms *after* scribe D wrote the first parts, we can *deduce* that Scribes A and D were contemporaries, and saw one another's work, and we may *infer* that they worked closely together, which is highly damaging for Dr Cooper's thesis. We will find this strong inference being strengthened to near certainty when we consider a later example.

Another example occurs on page Q37-f.3r. Many of the pages in this codex have four columns (some, such as Psalms, are two column). Scribe A wrote the whole of the book of Esther in four columns, and finished the book in the second column on Q37-f.3r. The next book, Tobit, is written by Scribe D, and commences in the third column of the same page. But if Simonides was Scribe A and wrote the whole codex then he would have continued on to the next book in the third column, and he would certainly not have left a page half blank with third and fourth columns empty for

²²⁴ Kirsopp Lake, *Codex Sinaiticus Petropolitanus, The New Testament the Epistle of Barnabas and the Shepherd of Hermas*, (1911).

²²⁵ 'Scribe D' can be distinguished from 'Scribe A' not only by his handwriting, but also by his far better accuracy and spelling, his itacisms, and his 'tailpiece' or *coronis* that identifies him when he finishes a book.

²²⁶ The syntax used here is that the number after 'Q' designates the quire number, the number after 'f.' designates the folio or leaf within that quire, and the final 'r' or 'v' designates whether the recto or the verso page of that leaf. Thus, for example, Q42-f.4r means the *recto* of the *fourth* leaf in the *forty-second* quire.

²²⁷ We cannot imagine a scribe beginning part way through the verses 4 Maccabees 8:7 and Psalm 97:3 on *versos*, having left the rectos of the same folios completely blank, and then imagine another scribe writing backwards to the beginning of the book.

someone else to write in. So, in this case, Scribe D started his work on the next book where Scribe A left off (end of Esther) – *on the same page*. We let Dirk Jonkind summarize the position:²²⁸

The work of...two scribes, scribe D and A, does not show...independence. In the book of Psalms, for example, scribe A continued the work of scribe D from the *verso* of the third folio of quire 62 inwards, which is halfway through Psalm 97:3, and then he subsequently finished all the poetic books.

In the closing stages of the historical books in the Old Testament the situation is even more complex...Scribe A wrote 2 Esdras, the first surviving book of this section, followed by scribe D who produced Tobit and Judith, after which scribe A added 1 Maccabees. Then scribe D penned the first seven pages of 4 Maccabees, and scribe A finished with the remaining nine. Clearly, these two scribes had a much closer working relationship with one another than with scribe B. Their combined work fits neatly into that of scribe B, but their individual work was in all likelihood not executed independently.

The greatest difficulty that Dr Cooper's thesis is in – which in fact destroys it – comes from an examination of Revelation Chapter 1. Here the transition between scribes does not take place discreetly on separate leaves, or on separate pages, or at page turns, or in separate columns, or on separate lines, or even in separate sentences, but at the level of separate words *within a line*: the switch is absolutely abrupt. We again let Dirk Jongkind summarize the arrangement:

Curiously, on the *verso* of folio 89.1 (NT 126) scribe D starts Revelation and stopped after he had written the first 34.5 lines of column 1. Scribe A takes over on this line and writes the remainder of the book.²²⁹

The evidence from Revelation 1 shows that Scribe A (whom Dr Cooper states is Simonides) worked with, and certainly saw, the *prior* work of Scribe D (whom according to Dr Cooper's thesis was a Jesuit forger unknown to Simonides who made changes *after* Simonides had completed his work). This contradicts Simonides' account of how he claimed to have produced the manuscript, and undermines Dr Cooper's reliance on Simonides that he was telling the truth.

Finally, Dr Cooper makes a remarkable comment in relation to page Q48-f.8v containing part of Jeremiah, for which he supplies a black-and-white image. He states,

²²⁸ D. Jongkind, *One Codex, Three Scribes, and many Books: Struggles with Space in Codex Sinaiticus*, in *New Testament Manuscripts Their Texts and Their World*, ed. Kraus & Nicklas, (Leiden, 2006), pp124-5.

²²⁹ Ibid.

But then we come to Q48-f.8v on which we encounter an attempt to entirely obliterate an inscription at the bottom of the page...The one and only suspicion that is raised is that the inscription was by Constantine Simonides, and was one of the several monograms and acrostics with which he signed his work.

Dr Cooper fails to inform his reader that no part of the books of Isaiah and Jeremiah (or Lamentations, or the minor prophets for that matter) are in the handwriting of 'Scribe A', whom he identifies as Simonides, but of a different scribe altogether. Therefore by simple deduction the obliteration could *not* be 'one of the several monograms and acrostics with which [Simonides] signed his work', since it was not his work.

A Matter of Forensics

With regard to much of the forensic evidence, the examples that Dr Cooper adduces simply cannot bear the interpretation he puts on them. Perfectly ordinary, natural and easily explained phenomena are described by him as extremely suspicious, and thus they become more fuel for his conspiracy theory. In his conclusion (p.105) he states that 'Almost every page of the manuscript bears telltale signs of forgery, mostly involving fading the text and discolouring the page in a most amateurish attempt to make it look much older than it truly is.' But is Dr Cooper qualified to make such an assertion? After all, he has not viewed the Codex physically, but has only studied two-dimensional photographic images.

Before embarking on writing a book concerning a parchment codex, it would be necessary to learn a little about parchment, ancient inks and bindings, causes of damage, and preservation and conservation techniques. But on all this, Dr Cooper's knowledge and background research is seriously wanting. This is liable to draw justifiable scorn from those with a modicum of knowledge about parchment manuscripts, and it ill serves readers who accept his comments, as they are being set up for ridicule should they believe him and repeat his arguments.

For example, Dr Cooper interprets as suspicious (pp.81-3) a regular pattern that progresses two pages faded, two pages unfaded, two pages faded etc. Begging the question, he describes the cause of the fading as deliberate mechanical erasure, i.e. 'rubbed',²³⁰ failing to inform his reader that this is an entirely natural phenomenon. An earlier mention of fading is in Dr Cooper's 'forensics' section, p.34:

But then we come to the unnatural fading of the ink in certain parts of the manuscript, unnatural because it is so inconsistent.

²³⁰ Even 'faded' is begging the question.

In effect Dr Cooper is saying: The fading is inconsistent, and that is unnatural; but it is also a regular pattern, and that is unnatural; and both prove forgery.

The Leipzig segment starts on Quire 35, Folio 1, recto, which, as he points out, has rather faint characters, and then, he says,

The real surprise is when the page is turned over to reveal the next two pages Q35-f.1v & 2r), both of which are undisturbed and have letters that are pristine and crisp throughout. Even more surprisingly, this pattern is followed throughout the first half of the Leipzig segment. Two-page spread, rubbed; next two-page spread pristine; two page spread, rubbed; next two page spread, pristine; and so on, all the way to Q37-f.3v. It is very odd. Such patterning is not something that one would expect from a natural deterioration...It is very clearly deliberate, although at this stage it is impossible to say who carried out the fading...under whose orders, or by whose hand, or to what end we cannot say...We then notice the same alternate rubbing and then pristine two-page spreads that we noticed in the first half of the Leipzig segment...Moving on, we encounter yet again the alternate faded and pristine conditions of each two-page spread.

One is dismayed to read that this is 'very clearly deliberate' since anyone with a modicum of knowledge of parchment manuscripts would recognize the phenomenon immediately, as did the scholar Rev. Benjamin Harris Cowper, who examined the very 43 Leipzig leaves that Dr Cooper is here describing, and who understood the cause:²³¹

It is important to observe here, that the two sides of a leaf of vellum differ in their power of receiving or of retaining the ink. The side upon which the hair grew...displays the writing in a brighter and better defined manner than the other side,—the inner or flesh side of the skin. The reason is, that the inner surface is softer and more liable to injury from various causes.²³²

The very same phenomenon is found with the British Library leaves, as Dr Cooper notes (p.90), and it is exactly what one would expect to find.²³³ Parchment is animal skin, which has two very different sides, a hair side (H) and a flesh side (F). Were the reader to assimilate the information on the Codex Sinaiticus project website he would find the explanation for this 'very odd' patterning there:

²³¹ Dr Cooper insists that 'The fading had to have been carried out at some time after 1913' (p.81). Yet Tischendorf noted it on these very leaves in 1846, and B.H. Cowper as soon as he saw them in 1865.

²³² B.H. Cowper *The Codex Sinaiticus* in *The Journal of Sacred Literature and Biblical Record*, Vol VI (1865).

²³³ The phenomenon was noted and explained by Tischendorf's in his facsimile of Codex Friderico-Augustanus: 'Qua in re memorabile est quod ejusdem folii altera pagina optime, altera pessime conservata est. Quod ex diversitate laterum pellis natum est; quo enim pellis proxime carnem attingebat facta est membrana multo mollior altero latere, quod textum pilis erat.' *Codex Friderico-Augustanus sive fragmenta Veteris Testamenti* (Leipzig, 1846), Prolegomena p.9.

The manuscript is made up from gatherings of parchment sheets called quires. These quires consist of 4 bi-folios or 8 leaves...Quires would be arranged with the flesh side of the parchment outermost then alternating with the matching sides facing each other throughout the quire.

Like other Greek manuscripts of its time, it follows Gregory's Rule. That is to say, it was made with matching pages of flesh and hair, with flesh on the outside of every quire of eight leaves. Thus the first page of a quire is always flesh, the second and third are hair, the fourth and fifth flesh, and so on. Whether a page is hair or flesh is easily told. Hair is darker, and absorbs the ink much better than the greasier flesh side, from which it tends to flake off.

Thus, for a whole quire the pages progress in the order FHHFFHHFFHHFFHHF. There was a very good presentational reason for assembling the sheets this way:

The quires of Sinaiticus correspond to Gregory's rule, whereby the outside of the quire consists of the flesh-side of the external vellum sheet and the sheets are laid on top of each other matching hair-sides and flesh-sides and leaving a flesh-side opening in the centre – this results in each opening alternating between hair-sides and flesh-sides, providing a consistency of colour and texture within each opening. This basic quire construction ensures that each opening presents a consistent appearance, alternating between the hair side and the flesh side of the leaves of parchment. At the time of production the differences were probably not particularly pronounced, but due to the different way in which the ink is absorbed, the hair sides preserve the text in a much clearer state than the flesh sides, and this results in the alternation in openings: from appearing very clear and then rather smudged.²³⁴

The softer, greasier flesh side is the more troublesome, and needs additional work to make it satisfactorily receptive for ink, which nevertheless is more prone to fading and detaching. The harder and smoother hair side is more receptive to ink, and fades less. Given the different ink receptivities *and* fading characteristics of the two sides of natural skin, the result after writing will, especially *after a long period of time*, be the very noticeable pattern that so perplexes Dr Cooper.

On p.34 Dr Cooper moves his suspicions on to Q36-f.1, the first leaf in Quire 36. But the reader, knowing Gregory's Rule explained above, will know exactly what to expect for the first leaf in a quire: a faded recto side, because it is flesh side, and a much clearer verso, because it is hair side. What then does Dr Cooper make of it?

²³⁴ P.M. Head, *The Gospel of Mark in Codex Sinaiticus: Textual and Reception-Historical Considerations*, in *Journal of Biblical Textual Criticism*, 13 (October 2008), 1-38.

But then we come to the unnatural fading...For example, Q36:f.1r is faded almost to the point of oblivion, whereas on its verso the vellum is clean and fresh, and the ink is crisp, clear and very new in appearance. It looks for all the world as if the recto has been washed in an ill-judged attempt to fade the ink.

What is completely natural and entirely as expected thus becomes 'unnatural' and evidence of 'tampering', in this case washing, and so more grist to the conspiracy mill.

Dr Cooper asks questions of a rhetorical nature to steer readers towards his own narrative without supplying sufficient information to enable the reader to evaluate the evidence and thereby arrive at conclusions different from his own, or at least to determine that Dr Cooper's conclusions are unsound. For example (p.34):

Again, just a brief random search of Sinaiticus' pages reveals evidence of just the sort of tampering that Simonides was complaining of. Q12:ff.1r-2v (containing Numbers 16:7 – 19:3), for example, shows extensive water damage that has left the adjacent leaves untouched. How is that possible? Q12:f.2 likewise shows 'worm' damage which again has left the adjacent folios untouched (including folio 1). Suspicion is raised here by the fact that the lower and outer edges of folio 2 are completely intact, showing no line of ingress by which a worm could reach that part of the leaf. How could it possibly have got there without gnawing its way through either the adjacent leaves or through the lower edge of the leaf?

With regard to the first case, water damage, the reader could be forgiven for believing that the adjacent leaves are extant and evidently untouched by water damage. However, the adjacent *preceding* leaf, Q11-f.8, is not extant, so nothing whatsoever can be said about whether it suffered water damage. The adjacent *following* leaf, Q12-f.3 is water damaged, as is the next extant leaf, Q12-f.6. So here Dr Cooper has provided incomplete information in respect of the adjacent preceding leaf (not revealing that it is not extant) and false information in respect of the adjacent following leaves. The few extant leaves and fragments from Numbers were discovered in 1975 in the collapsed store (except one, taken by Uspensky, and not from that store) and were not bound tightly together but scattered, and this explains why the pattern of water damage on Q12-f.1 and Q12-f.2 is different from the pattern on Q12-f.3 and Q12-f.6.

This also explains the 'wormhole' issue. We do not know whether the hole in Q12-f.2 is caused by worm, but let us assume that it is for the sake of evaluating Dr Cooper's argument. On that assumption we can see that the bottom corner of the immediately following leaf Q12-f.3 is 'eaten away' by worm also, and in this leaf the portion eaten away *does* extend to its lower and outer edges. If we overlay folio 2 over folio 3 we see clearly that the material removed on folio 2 has a region of coincidence with material removed on folio 3, so a worm that had so eaten into the corner of folio 3 from its edge would have immediate access to the preceding leaf (Q12-f.2).

Thus Dr Cooper's suggestions are thoroughly misleading. But more worryingly, Dr Cooper's actual statements that adjacent leaves are 'untouched' by two types of damage (water and 'worm') are *false*, as anyone can ascertain by checking the photographic print of Q12-f.3.

As in the example above, Dr Cooper makes unsubstantiated assertions about 'wormholes', not knowing whether the holes in question were actually caused by worm. Another such is on p.32, where he states in reference to Q12-f.6r (which is a leaf recovered in the 1975 New Finds):

[T]he scribe did...in at least one instance actually bend his line of text upwards to avoid a hole...The bottom three lines of column 4 begin parallel to each other, yet the bottom two lines suddenly veer upward to avoid a very large wormhole...The last letters of these lines are also seen to be reduced in size as the scribe tried to squeeze them into the available space...[Here] we see very clear evidence indeed of the fact that the text was recently added to vellum which was already ancient and damaged by time, worm and wax. In other words, Simonides' claim to have written out the text of Codex Sinaiticus...on already very ancient vellum, suddenly appears to be viable and true.

It is difficult to know where to start on such a concatenation of nonsense, presenting assertions as 'fact'. But, firstly, careful inspection shows that the bottom two lines were never in danger of being encroached on by the present hole.

Secondly, in this form of writing there are no spaces between the words, and no hyphens to mark breaks in words: all lines are required to begin with combinations of letters that could be found at the beginning of a Greek word. That put a strong constraint on word breaks, which required that the number of characters on a line would need to vary slightly, and skill was required to avoid excessively long or short lines, considering the setting of letters on more than one line at a time. The aforementioned bottom two lines of column 4 of this Q12-f.6r are a classic case. This is worse still because it is at the end of the last column on a recto page, at a page turn. The scribe (Scribe A) has *compressed* both the character spacing and the character height in order to accommodate the connective *kai* immediately before the page turn, rather than break this three-letter word in one of two places, which he was not permitted to do: *kai* (= 'and') is, after all, an ideal word to appear immediately before a page turn. Reducing the character height, the first letter slightly smaller, and the second and third smaller still, the scribe has attempted to maintain parallelism with the *tops* of the characters in the line with those in the lines above. The same effect is seen at the bottom right of the second column on the same page, where there is no hole in the proximity. The *lines* do not 'suddenly veer upward' at all – it is an illusion arising from progressive reduction in the size of the characters whilst retaining alignment along the *tops* of the letter.

What we have here is not a scribe avoiding a hole, but a characteristic of that particular scribe. We have already pointed out another example on the same page. It is one of the characteristics by which we can distinguish between scribes. Scribe A uses a particular type of *kai* compression, and when there is not space even for compression his method of compressing *kai* at the end of a line becomes a single *kappa* with an oblique stroke, technically known as the *kai* compendium:

For Scribe A, compression begins a long way back into the line at the 6th or 7th letter (11th in poetical texts). The upright slopes become elongated and the rounded letters diminished to allow the writing to be compressed into a smaller space... The KAI compendium by Scribe A is in the form of an oblique stroke at an acute angle from the bottom of the K.²³⁵

Thirdly, Simonides did not claim to have used 'very ancient vellum' 'damaged by time, worm and wax', but vellum that was 'apparently prepared many centuries ago', without specifying a particular age (*The Guardian*, September 3, 1862). But as to its condition he specifically states in the same letter that before writing he prepared the book by *removing* leaves 'injured by time and moths' (which, one would reasonably infer, includes 'worm'), whereas Dr Cooper claims as *proof* of recent writing what Simonides denies, that he wrote the codex on 'very ancient vellum' already 'damaged by time, worm and wax'. We ask the reader to remember this alleged proof (recent writing on 'very ancient' and 'already damaged' vellum), as we shall be revisiting it when we consider alleged distressing of the manuscript.

Such fallacies abound, for on p.90 Dr Cooper invents a suggestion that a roughly rectangular aperture on leaf Q43-f.3 is 'supposed to have been a wormhole'. Supposed by whom, we ask? Here is a massive dose of 'begging the question' – 'supposed to have been' a *fake* wormhole made by the forger, no doubt. He then shows that it cannot be a wormhole because it is too square, and so must be manmade. And because it is manmade, it is a mark of forgery, a work-in-progress artificial wormhole, according to Dr Cooper, who mentions this 'wormhole' in his conclusion (p.105) as one of those evidences that is 'damning enough proof on its own' that Codex Sinaiticus is forged. Let us hear Dr Cooper himself (p.90):

Just two folios further on (at Q43-f.3) and we have what is supposed to have been a wormhole. But this isn't just any wormhole. It is perfectly oblong, each corner of which consists of a perfect 90 degree right angle...No worm known to nature ever made such a hole as this. Furthermore, there is no line of ingress in the page...So how did this oblong aperture get there? It is clearly manmade, and an attempt to add a little mark of authenticity to the page. What the perpetrator forgot to do was to finish it.

²³⁵ A.C. Myshrall, *Codex Sinaiticus, its Correctors, and the Caesarean Text of the Gospels* (2005).

Now, we do not agree with Dr Cooper about the perfection of this shape, but we grant that though the bottom and top are a bit ragged, there are two straight vertical sides. When we *read* the Greek text we see that in that position, and in that size, there was once the Greek capital letter *pi*, Π. Three of the sides are very rectilinear on that letter. Now, iron-gall ink is acidic and liable to corrode parchment, and here the ink has corroded the parchment, leaving a flap attached at the bottom but extremely weak on three sides (top horizontal, and side verticals). When we look on the other side of the leaf we see that in that position there was a Greek capital letter *omicron*, Ο. The ink corrosion from that side has weakened the part of the parchment that was holding that flap in place, as well as added to the weakness occasioned by the corrosion due to the Π strokes, and the parchment has simply dropped out. So, it is 'manmade' in the sense that it is caused by man, but is purely an unintended consequence of the original writing done with corrosive ink on parchment, and it does not in the slightest extent suggest forgery or an attempt to add fake wormholes. The phenomenon is widely understood, and is mentioned in the Kirsopp Lake facsimile of over a century ago:

[T]he thicker leaves, which have generally preserved the writing better than the thin ones, are inclined to a yellowish tint. Many of the leaves are so thin that the writing from the other side is sometimes so plainly visible as to become confusing, and in a few cases the ink has eaten through the vellum so as to leave holes.²³⁶

Dr Cooper makes a great deal of leaf Q11-f.2 (containing parts of Numbers chapters 5, 6 and 7) which is missing a large portion, asserting that Tischendorf deliberately mutilated it (p.73, 75):

It is a matter of deep suspicion that this particular leaf (Q11-f.2), which had been in Tischendorf's care and keeping...should have been... mutilated in such a strange fashion...and deliberately...destroyed the incriminating portion...it is blatantly and very plainly deliberate. Did the missing portions of the leaf contain evidence of Simonides' authorship, acrostics and so on? Most probably, but thanks to Tischendorf and his shears, we shall never know...Tischendorf had to have taken it with him for the express purpose of cutting out large portions of it. The only possible reason he would have had for this remarkable action was to remove evidence which contradicted all that he was claiming for the manuscript...Witness his butchery of Q11-f.2. Why did he take this folio along with the Russian leaves, and why did he cut away and destroy such a large portion of it?

Thus he continues, piling on one unsupported assertion upon another. The question, 'Why did he take this folio along with the Russian leaves?' is based on a false

²³⁶ Kirsopp Lake, *Codex Sinaiticus Petropolitanus, The New Testament the Epistle of Barnabas and the Shepherd of Hermas*, (1911).

premise. Tischendorf did *not* take it to Russia – Uspensky did:²³⁷ he brought it to St Petersburg in 1861, having found it in Cairo earlier that year. Uspensky and Tischendorf had four cordial face-to-face meetings in St Petersburg in November 1862. On the first, Uspensky allowed Tischendorf to borrow this leaf, and the other fragments of the Codex that Uspensky possessed, for copying.²³⁸ We very much doubt that Tischendorf would have got away with borrowing it ‘for the express purpose of cutting out large portions of it’. And it is certain that Uspensky would have noticed if Tischendorf had ‘mutilated’ it with shears and ‘destroyed such a large portion of it’ while in his care. Yet had Tischendorf done so, certainly Uspensky would not have lent them to him a second time. Yet two years later Uspensky lent them again for three months for Tischendorf to display during his trip to England in 1865. Having received them back, Uspensky thanked Tischendorf for looking after them so carefully and returning them in good condition.²³⁹ Dr Cooper’s ‘blatant and very deliberate’ ‘butchery’ by Tischendorf, upon which he relies so much as a matter of ‘deep suspicion’, simply vanishes.

There is, in any case, a perfectly straightforward explanation for the shape of these fragments: they were recovered by Uspensky from the binding of a secular Greek book that he found in Cairo: the leaf had been re-used for constructing the end boards and papers, a practice that was very common in bookbinding. Uspensky recognized it as part of Codex Sinaiticus and carefully peeled away the remains of that leaf from the binding.²⁴⁰

Other parts of the Codex have been found (e.g. by Beneshevich in the late nineteenth century) in volumes at St Catherine’s also, and indicate that by around three hundred years ago some leaves from the Codex had become permanently separated

²³⁷ As we saw noted even by Scrivener above, *A Full Collation of the Sinaitic MS. with the Received Text of the New Testament* (1864).

²³⁸ Letter to Angelika, November 23, 1862, St Petersburg. Tischendorf later published facsimiles of Uspensky’s fragments. He borrowed them again in 1865 to display them on his trip to England.

²³⁹ Uspensky to Tischendorf: ‘I have received the portions from the Sinaitic codex. You, through the bookbinder of the British Museum, put them into parchment to protect them from spoilage that could be caused them by the touch of the curious. Thank you for this.’ Leaf Q11-f.2 was finally transferred by Uspensky to the Imperial Museum in St Petersburg in 1883, where it is still stored.

²⁴⁰ Interestingly, it is recorded when, where and in what book Uspensky made this find, but the details do not appear to have permeated through to the online Codex Sinaiticus Project as they clearly have not read all of Uspensky’s papers. The online site shows photographs of these fragments, and states (obviously translated) ‘In the 1845 [it was actually 1861 for these fragments], by the bishop Porphyrius Uspensky other fragments were removed from the Monastery [these fragments were from the Cairo Jouvani *metochion*] and are now conserved in to the Slatykov-Shchedrin State Public Library, St Petersburg. Some of the Russian fragments (like some of the New Finds in the Saint Catherine Monastery) show evidences of folded lines that may suggest they were reused as cover material [the ‘suggestion’ is correct: we know it for a fact since Uspensky tells us].’ In spite of such errors on the website, it is at least correct that *Uspensky* recovered these fragments, not Tischendorf. How could Dr Cooper have missed this, since he claims to have viewed the website?

from the main body — most of Genesis to Chronicles is not extant.²⁴¹ One of the most recently found fragments was part of the leaf containing Joshua 1. This appears in Greek volume S.2289 in the library of St Catherine's, which volume was bound by the monastery itself around 1727,²⁴² the Codex leaf being re-cycled as a board lining. It was discovered in 2009 because the covering paper pastedown had become torn, thereby exposing writing from the Codex beneath.²⁴³ This finding on its own militates against Dr Cooper's thesis of a nineteenth century origin of the Codex.

We might add that the first recorded sighting and description in the 'West' of Codex Sinaiticus (as well as the Golden Evangelistarium) at St Catherine's monastery in Sinai is by Vitaliano Donati, who visited St Catherine's in 1761, which also attests to its existence in the eighteenth century.²⁴⁴

Alleged Distressing

On the first 43 leaves removed by Tischendorf and now in Leipzig the parchment is a shade lighter to the eye than many of the leaves elsewhere, though *all* have the expected yellow colour of old parchment.²⁴⁵ In Dr Cooper's scheme the lighter shade of the Leipzig leaves is claimed as proof that the parchment was of 'recent manufacture' when Simonides allegedly wrote on it, rather than 'very ancient' and

²⁴¹ Others were likely separated in 1734 when manuscripts were moved to the new library: some of these turned up in the 'New Finds' in 1975 in the old storeroom that suffered earthquake damage. These included a fragment of Q17-f.1, which contains parts of Joshua 12, 13 and 14. A leaf containing Joshua 1 was re-used in the bookbinding of S.2289 (see below).

²⁴² S.2289 is one of a group of 18 manuscript bindings that were bound in the monastery c.1704-1727, with common binding methods, structure, sewing, decoration and tooling marks.

²⁴³ Nikolas Sarris, *Classification of Finishing Tools in Greek Bookbinding: Establishing Links from the Library of St Catherine's Monastery, Sinai, Egypt* (PhD Thesis, 2010). See also *The discovery of an additional Codex Sinaiticus fragment in Codex Sinaiticus: New Perspectives on the Ancient Biblical Manuscript* (2015).

²⁴⁴ V. Donati *Del Giornale del viaggio fatto in Levante nell'anno 1759 d'ordine di Sua Maesta dal Medico Vitaliano Donati di Padova*.

²⁴⁵ Dr Cooper, David Daniels and many bloggers have led thousands astray by claiming that the 43 leaves in Leipzig are (or were until little more than a hundred years ago) 'white'. That is not the case: they are merely a shade lighter than the most common colour of the leaves in the British Library. On the Codex Sinaiticus Project website, which these writers have used to make comparisons, only the photographs from the British Library are close to true colour, as the blue/cyan/green/yellow/red/magenta colour strips in each photograph reveal. The photographs of the Leipzig leaves are colour profiled (colour strips show blue as indigo, green too dark, yellow too light, magenta as pinkish) making their yellow leaves look a greyish white, and the photographs from St Petersburg and St Catherine's are profiled differently again (magenta has become red, and red has become orange) making their leaves look browner. It is thus completely invalid to compare colours between locations without attempting to correct for this. Daniels on his front cover of his book *Is the "World's Oldest Bible" a Fake?* shows a collage of all pages from the Codex to demonstrate differences in colour. However, the differences in the colour reproduction between locations is far greater than the real variation in colour of the parchment leaves between locations, so the result is impressive visually, but thoroughly unrepresentative. When corrected towards true colour the contrast effectively disappears and the 'colour difference' argument collapses.

‘already ancient and damaged by time, worm and wax’, as he had claimed in his ‘forensics’ section, (p.32). His forensics, after all, were an attempt to prove that the writing was done long after the parchment had aged. Let us review this once more because it is a typical example of forcing observable phenomena to support predetermined conclusions, even though inconsistent and contradictory—very much the method of conspiracy theory.

In his introduction (p.6) Dr Cooper states that the Codex is ‘written out on ancient unused parchment’; on p.29 it was ‘an already ancient codex whose vellum leaves were entirely blank, having been prepared centuries before’; and on pp.32-4 he asserts that Simonides wrote his manuscript on ‘very ancient’ vellum with pre-existing wormholes and splashes of candlewax:

[W]e are about to examine evidence which shows that the scribe *did* space his letters around pre-existing wormholes...the fact that they avoid the hole shows that they were written long after the hole was made by the bookworm...here we see very clear evidence indeed of the fact that the text was recently added to vellum which was *already ancient and damaged by time, worm and wax*. In other words, Simonides’ claim to have written out the text of Codex Sinaiticus in the early-mid 19th century, on *already very ancient vellum*, suddenly appears to be viable and *true*. (Emphasis added).

Now, if it is *true* that Simonides wrote on ‘already very ancient’ parchment that was ‘damaged by time, worm and wax’, then it would be *false* that such parchment would be ‘snow-white’ to the eye when Simonides wrote on it – it would have yellowed with age. Dr Cooper, after all, gives us his own description of what becomes of parchment with time (p.79):

[P]archment commonly takes on a dark and often grubby hue over long periods of time...[It] typically fades, and after perhaps a few years only—never mind 1500—the parchment begins once more to look like, well, parchment.

If, as Dr Cooper asserts, Simonides wrote on ‘very ancient’ parchment, which would be ‘dark’, then Simonides did not write on leaves of ‘recent manufacture’, which might be ‘white’. But because the Leipzig leaves appear somewhat lighter to the eye on the Codex Sinaiticus Project website Dr Cooper draws the following opposite conclusion:

[T]he Leipzig leaves [removed by Tichendorf in 1844] were of relatively recent manufacture and were certainly not fifteen centuries old.

But such a logical application of the law of contradiction undermines Dr Cooper’s assertion that the leaves were distressed, so here Dr Cooper completely reverses his opinion and concludes that the traditional yellow parchment colour of all the other leaves recovered from St Catherine’s, whether by Uspensky in 1845, Tichendorf in

1853 and 1859, or those discovered in 1975, had a fake tan: i.e. Simonides wrote on new parchment of 'recent manufacture' that looked 'snow-white', but the forgers distressed it to make it yellow to give the appearance of being ancient.

So, which is it? Did Simonides write on 'very ancient vellum', 'damaged by time, worm and wax' as Dr Cooper claims on p.34, which he states would be 'dark' in colour; or did he write on vellum of 'recent manufacture' (p.79), 'so pristine' (p.86) that it was as 'white as snow' (p.78) and 'so obviously not ancient' (p.89) as he claims later? Whether it was dark or light, whether it had wormholes or no wormholes, whether it was 'already very ancient' or 'obviously not ancient' but of 'recent manufacture' — *whatever* the condition (and Dr Cooper makes entirely contrary claims) all is interpreted to support his thesis.

Even more unfortunately, Dr Cooper calls the wrong witnesses to the condition of the Leipzig leaves. He cites Uspensky as a witness, for he says (p.78) that the Leipzig parchment 'was described by [Uspensky] as "white" ("...the thinnest white parchment")'; (p.82) 'the Leipzig leaves were so pristine when first seen by Uspensky'; (p.86) 'the Leipzig leaves...[were] "white" according to Uspensky'. But Uspensky never visited Leipzig all his life, and he arrived at St Catherine's in 1845 some months after the 43 'Leipzig leaves' had been carried away by Tischendorf. As we have seen, Uspensky was not describing the 'Leipzig leaves' but the leaves remaining at St Catherine's monastery in 1845.

Dr Cooper also cites James Alexander M'Clymont as a witness of the 'Leipzig leaves', whom he says 'came a little later when in 1913 they were still white as snow': this 'witness testifies in 1913 that it – the Codex [Friderico-Augustinus] – "is written on snow-white vellum."' (p.78). But M'Clymont was writing secondary literature and not claiming to be testifying as an *observer*. Moreover, he was not even commenting on the Leipzig leaves, which the reader could have seen for himself had not Dr Cooper pared away the author's context: 'Codex Sinaiticus...was rescued from oblivion nearly fifty years ago²⁴⁶...and now lies in the Library of St. Petersburg. It is written on snow-white vellum, supposed to have been made from the skins of antelopes.' Similar reservations attach to a third claimed 'contemporary observer', Ernst von Dobschutz, who in an encyclopaedia article published in 1909 stated in extremely similar wording to M'Clymont that 'The wonderfully fine snow-white

²⁴⁶ He obviously wrote his article in the very early twentieth century, referring to the collection of 1859. Interestingly, Kirsopp Lake was a real eyewitness in 1908 of what was lying in the Library of St Petersburg ('written on snow-white vellum' according to his contemporary M'Clymont) for he did a photographic facsimile there, and describes the leaves as 'inclined to a yellowish tint'. *Codex Sinaiticus Petropolitanus, The New Testament the Epistle of Barnabas and the Shepherd of Hermas*, (1911). In 1864 Scrivener, echoing Tregelles who had seen it in 1862, refers to its 'present look and condition. The vellum leaves, now almost yellow in colour', F.H. Scrivener, *A full Collation of the Codex Sinaiticus with the received text of the New Testament* (1864), p.xxx.

parchment of the Sinaitic MS seems to be of antelope skin.' Tischendorf had proposed that the parchment was made of antelope or gazelle skin, but microscopic examination has shown that the parchment is mostly calf with some sheepskin, neither of which is naturally 'snow white'. M'Clymont and Dobschutz were simply repeating Tischendorf's opinions in their secondary and tertiary literature. Dr Cooper provides no evidence that Dobschutz was referring to the Leipzig leaves, nor that he had ever himself seen them.

Accordingly, Dr Cooper is left with not a single genuine witness who even *saw* the Leipzig leaves in the nineteenth century, never mind one who described its apparent colour as 'white' or having an appearance inconsistent with being produced in antiquity. He wrongly quotes sources who certainly *did not* see the Leipzig leaves, but quotes none of the scores of people who certainly *did*. And yet Dr Cooper (whom, we recall, is not himself a witness) assures his readers that the Leipzig leaves in the nineteenth century had 'astonishing whiteness' (p.79) and had the appearance of being 'of relatively recent manufacture' (p.79) as they were 'so clean and new and undecayed in their appearance' (p.78).²⁴⁷ This is all the pure invention of the conspiracy theorists and entirely contrary to the facts.

Fortunately we can produce genuine expert eyewitness statements, for example by Rev. Benjamin Harris Cowper, who described both the parchment and the writing on these very Leipzig leaves from his examination in 1865. B.H. Cowper was a highly esteemed scholar, thoroughly familiar with parchment manuscripts from late antiquity.²⁴⁸ He had produced a facsimile of the fifth century Great Uncial Bible Codex Alexandrinus (in the British Museum) in 1860, and was regarded as one of the finest Syriac experts of his age, who in 1861 translated and published extracts of the

²⁴⁷ This fiction, which Dr Cooper has rather credulously swallowed, was promulgated by David W. Daniels as having the imprimatur of direct divine revelation for making such claims. Daniels says in his book *Is the "World's Oldest Bible" a Fake?* p.12, 'I...went into prayer...[and] I heard these words: "What if they're fakes?" And I saw a mental image of Codex Sinaiticus...A few days later, I was praying...My mind was filled with one thought: Codex Sinaiticus...I prayed and asked God, "What question should I ask?". And I heard, "What colour is it?" And that was the beginning of all you are about to read.' Daniels admits that he always thought that Codex Sinaiticus was 'counterfeit', so having received what he believes was infallible divine revelation that the proof of its fakeness was to be found in its 'colour', he was predisposed with considerable confirmation bias to accept the theory dangled in front of him by Steven Spencer ('Steven Avery') from 2014 based on the falsehoods of the compulsive liar Constantine Simonides, reinforced by images of the Leipzig leaves in false colour.

²⁴⁸ B.H. Cowper (1822-1904), Biblical scholar and archaeologist, was the editor of the *Journal of Sacred Literature*, the self-declared basis of which was 'distinctively Protestant and orthodox'. Cowper was also secretary of the Evangelical Continental Society, among whose objects was 'to assist and encourage Evangelical Societies on the Continent, in their endeavours to propagate the Gospel', mainly evangelization of Roman Catholics. He was highly regarded by scholars of paleography and of oriental languages, and by prominent evangelicals such as C.H. Spurgeon.

first two ecumenical councils from a Syriac manuscript in the British library (MS 14528) written in AD 501.²⁴⁹

While Dr Cooper alleges that 'the Leipzig leaves and the writing upon them were in such pristine condition' (p.78) in an attempt to establish that 'the Leipzig leaves were of relatively recent manufacture' (p.79), Benjamin Harris Cowper, who personally examined these Leipzig leaves in 1865, described them as 'time-worn' and their original ink writing as 'of a pale iron-brown colour':

On Feb. 15 of the present year [1865] a meeting was convened at the rooms of the Royal Society of Literature, when many gentlemen who take an interest in such matters were in attendance...Dr. Tischendorf exhibited the Codex Friderico-Augustanus, which some may need to be reminded contains part of the Old Testament from the same volume as the Codex Sinaiticus, but discovered much earlier. This is a noble fragment upon large vellum, the leaves of which are thin and time-worn. The ink is of a pale iron-brown colour, except the frequent corrections, which are darker.

B.H. Cowper's assessment as to age, was that the Leipzig leaves were unquestionably ancient, though not quite as old as Tischendorf was claiming, to which judgment he says Sir Frederick Madden of the British Museum concurred (which establishes another named expert eyewitness to the Leipzig leaves).²⁵⁰ Cowper carefully weighed 'all the evidence or phenomena' from his examination and concluded that the 'time-worn' appearance of the Leipzig leaves was consistent with a manuscript well over 1400 years old in his day:

An inspection of the large fragments, kindly shewn us by Dr. Tischendorf, convinces us that the MS. may be referred to the year 400 as a medium, not much earlier, nor much later...Our own impression, from all the evidence or phenomena, is that the Sinaitic MS. was written most likely in Egypt, for it has a very Coptic look, and that it is fairly assignable to somewhere about A.D.400...[W]e are glad to find that our reserve in admitting Dr. Tischendorf's date...is favoured by the utterance of so eminent an authority as Sir Frederick Madden. Our impressions that the MS. is not coeval with Constantine, but later, are rather confirmed now we have seen a part of it.²⁵¹

We consider that B.H. Cowper was well qualified to know what he was talking about, and we add that Tischendorf exhibited the Leipzig leaves together with fragments of Codex Sinaiticus from Uspensky's personal collection (which Uspensky had removed in 1845 and 1861) not only to the 'many gentlemen who take an

²⁴⁹ One of the few early manuscripts whose dating can be derived from information in the colophon.

²⁵⁰ He saw Madden at the British Museum on February 2, 1865, to discuss exhibiting the Leipzig leaves.

²⁵¹ B.H. Cowper *The Codex Sinaiticus* in *The Journal of Sacred Literature and Biblical Record*, Vol VI (1865).

interest in such matters' at the Royal Society of Literature, but to the country's finest scholars at the universities of Oxford and Cambridge,²⁵² and to many scholars at the British Museum,²⁵³ all places having large collections of ancient manuscripts with experts thereat. Just as it had become abundantly clear to Tregelles once he had examined the Codex Sinaiticus in Leipzig in 1862, it was now apparent to all scholars familiar with ancient manuscripts who examined parts of it in England in 1865 that the claims of Simonides to have written the material 25 years previously were utterly baseless. In relation to this unfortunate recent episode, B.H. Cowper particularly drew attention to Simonides' 'extraordinary disregard of truth' in connection with advancing 'the most reckless claim that was ever put forth':

It is quite true the Greek Simonides made an effort among us to establish the most reckless claim that was ever put forth; and true that he found some to believe him; but it is also true that none who had the least acquaintance with palaeography were led away by him for a moment. His extraordinary disregard of truth has, we hope by this time, convinced even those who could not judge the case on its own merits. At present we hear nothing of him, and we are quite sure that he will never again even secure a hearing from the literary men of our nation.²⁵⁴

The following year, the *Christian Remembrancer* concurred:

Professor Tischendorf brought the Codex Friderico-Augustanus (an undoubted part of the [Sinaitic] MS.) to England in 1865, where it was exhibited at London, Oxford, and Cambridge; and no one could entertain a doubt that those venerable vellum leaves, inscribed with their beautiful simple characters, were a real article and no forgery. It may be added, that Simonides has been for some time silent, and as the onus of proving the Sinaitic MS. to be his own manufacture rests with him, we may reasonably infer that, in the absence of all proof, his bare assertions will simply go for nothing.²⁵⁵

It is worth at this point considering the extent of the difference in colour between the Leipzig leaves and the British Library leaves since Dr Cooper makes so much to ride on it. Nowhere—and certainly not the Codex Sinaiticus Project (CSP) website²⁵⁶— is there a display where the colours are consistently rendered between these two sites.

²⁵² In a letter to his wife Angelika from Cambridge on March 10 he described visiting several colleges, where he displayed the Leipzig leaves, and that he was awarded an honorary doctorate. He also received an honorary doctorate from the University of Oxford on March 16.

²⁵³ Writing to his wife Angelika from London on February 9, 1865 he details the great interest of the large crowd of officials and scholars who examined the Leipzig leaves, the Codex Friderico-Augustanus, at the British Museum. Writing to Angelika again on February 12 he relates the continued great interest in the Leipzig leaves and the fragments of the Codex that he had borrowed from Uspensky.

²⁵⁴ B.H. Cowper *The Codex Sinaiticus* in *The Journal of Sacred Literature and Biblical Record*, Vol VI (1865).

²⁵⁵ *The Christian Remembrancer*, Vol. LII (1866).

²⁵⁶ Only the British Library leaves are close to true colour on that website.

The apparent 'whiteness' of the Leipzig leaves that observers of the *website* claim (though not observers of the actual Codex itself) is due to a colour profiling that is rendering the Leipzig leaves almost white in reproduction. On the other hand the British Library leaves are reproduced at close to real colour.²⁵⁷ Jacob W. Peterson – Research Fellow with The Center for the Study of New Testament Manuscripts (CSNTM), which is a world leader in digitizing ancient manuscripts,²⁵⁸ notes

[T]he [CSP] photographs of the Leipzig portion are not entirely accurate representations of the real leaves...[T]he Leipzig leaves are artificially lighter in the [CSP] images than in reality.

I made a technical measurement of the lightness value of the white square in the colour target in one of the images at Leipzig, and it was 99, which is impossible given the type of target used and in comparison to the 95 value seen in the images at London. This means that the image from Leipzig is washed out. At minimum, it has what is technically called a $\Delta 4$ change.

[I]t is *demonstrably untrue* that the leaves in Leipzig are the cool-grey colour that is shown in the [CSP] digital images. It is *demonstrably untrue* that those leaves are drastically different from those in London. The Leipzig leaves in actuality have a slight yellow tint that is exactly the same as, or very near to, the tint of some leaves in London.

To overcome the vagaries of colour reproduction and processing one can record the actual colour of a physical objects by choosing the closest colour from an atlas of calibrated colour swatches. The Codex been measured by this direct comparison method using the Natural Colour Scheme standard.²⁵⁹ Using this standard, the colour of the British Library leaves is typically S1010-Y10R, and that of the Leipzig leaves is S1005-Y20R, as shown below (swatches taken directly from NCS). However, there is some variation in colour within the hundreds of leaves at the British Library, and some of the leaves have also been measured as colour S1005-Y20R, i.e. *identical* in colour to the leaves at Leipzig.

²⁵⁷ For further details, including images of what the Leipzig leaves actually look like when compared to familiar references (skin tone etc) see the supporting documentation: K. McGrane *Is David W. Daniels' "Codex Sinaiticus Evidence" a Fake?*

²⁵⁸ CSNTM have worked with more than 40 institutions around the world and produced more than 350,000 images of New Testament manuscripts. They did not, however, produce the images for the CSP project. These quotations taken from a conversation between Peterson and James Snapp, Jr.

²⁵⁹ Colour Atlas 96, Natural Colour System, Swedish Standard SS 01 91 02 Edition 3 (NCS).

S 1010-Y10R

British Library leaves



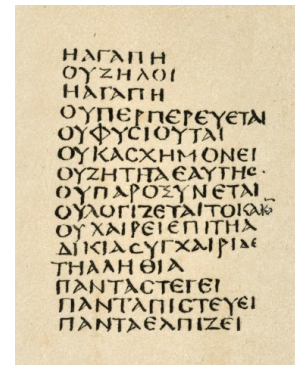
S 1005-Y20R

Leipzig University leaves



These are small differences, which can be accounted for by the histories of these portions of the Codex having been very different since 1844. Who, though, could describe the S1005-Y20R leaves at Leipzig as ‘white’, but the S1010-Y10R leaves as ‘stained’ as does Dr Cooper, Daniels and others?

We also have a record of the colour that the British Library leaves were in 1845, which Tischendorf removed to Russia in 1859,²⁶⁰ since Uspensky produced colour plates of parts of the Codex (see right). What Uspensky described as ‘white parchment’ is an extremely close match to the leaves in the British Library today, so those leaves have not noticeably changed in colour since 1845.



One can today see the colour of fragments that Uspensky removed (e.g. Q3-f.4) to see how visually ‘white’ they really are: they are the same colour as the leaves now in the British Library, the colour of old parchment.

Another of Uspensky’s collection, the fragmentary leaf from Numbers, appears in a superb colour facsimile published in England in 1866,²⁶¹ and its shades are from yellow to brown.

²⁶⁰ For example, see plate XVI in Uspensky’s *Восток христианский: Египет и Синай: виды, очерки, планы и надписи к путешествиям А. Порфирия* (St Petersburg, 1857). Plate XV in the same work is from Genesis 24 which Uspensky removed to St Petersburg. Plates of other manuscripts in purple vellum are also shown.

²⁶¹ *Transactions of the Royal Society of Literature*, Vol.8, 1866. The fragment was lent to Tischendorf for his trip to London in 1865. Uspensky discovered it in Cairo in 1861 within the binding of a secular book.



Figure 14 Plate of Uspensky's fragment of Codex Sinaiticus from Numbers

Now Uspensky was an expert, and he identified the Codex Sinaiticus in 1845 as being a production of the fifth century. Being at least 1200 years old in his day, and showing yellowish in his colour facsimiles, the parchment obviously didn't *appear* white to him, even though it was written, as he says, on 'the thinnest white parchment'. Comparing what he says about the Sinaitic manuscript and the Golden Evangelistarium this becomes abundantly clear:

Codex Sinaiticus: 'written on the thinnest white parchment in four sections of a long and wide leaf.'

Golden Evangelistarium: 'written in large characters on the thinnest white parchment, two columns, in rather beautiful gold letters.'

The Russian phrase for 'thinnest white parchment' is identical in both cases.²⁶²

²⁶² The descriptions are from *Первое путешествие в Синайский Монастырь в 1845 году Архимандрита Порфирия Успенского* (St Petersburg, 1856).

Later that same year, but this time at the Panteleimon Monastery at Mount Athos, Uspensky describes a New Testament there:

It is written on thin white parchment with a fine, but precise and beautiful handwriting in the 10th century.²⁶³

In his diary from his trip to St Catherine's in 1850 Uspensky describes the Golden Evangelistarium once again:

The Church Gospel, in which the readings are arranged for weeks and holidays, beginning with Easter, is written on a thin white parchment in two columns in gold letters and presented to the Sinai monastery by the Greek king Theodosius III (715-717).²⁶⁴

Now here we have manuscripts identified as being from the fifth to tenth century written on 'white parchment'. Clearly we need to understand what nineteenth century palaeographers meant by 'white parchment' and 'white vellum'. It is not difficult to discover. Quotations could be multiplied almost without number, but to cover the dates of those cited by Dr Cooper as referring to 'white parchment' we reproduce two from 1849 (contemporaries with Uspensky and Tischendorf), the first, by Westwood, a palaeographer, and the second by the aforementioned famous collector of manuscripts Robert Curzon, and one later palaeographer in 1912, Thompson (contemporary with M'Clymont and Dobschutz).

[1849] It was the custom of the Greeks and Romans, during the early ages of Christianity, to write their most valued productions in letters of gold and silver, and upon vellum stained with purple, or some analogous colour...Manuscripts entirely composed of purple vellum are of the greatest rarity...since it more frequently occurs that only certain important portions of the volume...are written on vellum thus prepared, the remainder of the text being on white vellum...Codices purpureo-argentei are much rarer than those entirely in golden writing, the latter being used not only on purple but also on white vellum, whereas the silver letters would not easily be legible except on a dark ground.²⁶⁵

[1849] [T]his, to my admiration and surprise, was not only the finest manuscript on Mount Athos, but the finest I had met with in any Greek monastery with the single exception of the golden manuscript of the New Testament at Mount Sinai. It was a 4to. Evangelistarium, written in golden letters on fine *white* vellum...in [several] respects resembling the Mount Sinai MS...[B]esides the above two mentioned there are not, I believe, more than seven or eight MSS. of this description in existence, and of these several are merely fragments, and only one is on white vellum: this is in the

²⁶³ Uspensky, *Первое путешествие в Афонские монастыри и скиты* (Kiev, 1877).

²⁶⁴ Uspensky, *Книга бытия моего. Дневники и автобиографические записки* (St Petersburg, 1894-1902), Vol. IV.

²⁶⁵ J.O. Westwood, *Palaeographia Sacra Pictoria*, (London, 1849), pp.9-10.

library of the Holy Synod at Moscow. Five of the others are on blue or purple vellum.²⁶⁶

[1912] Gold was used as a writing fluid at a very early period...Something has already been said on its use in connexion with purple-stained vellum. Ordinary white vellum MSS. were also written in gold...Writing in silver appears to have ceased contemporaneously with the disuse of stained vellum. This metal would not show to advantage on a white ground.²⁶⁷

It is clear from these extracts that in the usage of palaeographers, collectors, and curators 'white' is a distinguishing term for a *type* or *kind* of parchment, not a reference to 'its present look and condition' (Scrivener), just as, for example, we properly describe a statue as being sculpted in 'white marble', even if now *appearing* grey due to the effects of pollution. Parchment was commonly produced in three colour grades in ancient times: white, yellow, and purple. The white represented the unstained natural colour, and could be somewhat yellow;²⁶⁸ the yellow and purple parchment were intentionally stained.²⁶⁹ Scriptures were generally written on the unstained white parchment using black/brown and red inks (occasionally gold ink), or on stained purple parchment using silver and gold inks. It is this substrate, possibly whitened with pounce, but not deliberately colour stained, that is referred to by the description 'white parchment', and not its present appearance. That is why M'Clymont was entirely correct to say that the codex then in St Petersburg was 'written on snow-white vellum', even though its coloration when he wrote that was certainly *yellow*, as noted in 1908 by his contemporary and an actual eyewitness Kirsopp Lake. Likewise, when Uspensky referred to the codex as being 'white parchment' he was identifying the *type* of parchment, distinct, for example, from the uncials he elsewhere described (and showed in colour plates) that were written on 'purple vellum'.²⁷⁰

Moreover, the type of parchment is indicative of its dating:

In judging of the date of a manuscript on skins, attention must be paid to the quality of the material, the oldest being almost invariably written on the thinnest and whitest

²⁶⁶ R. Curzon, *Visits to Monasteries in the Levant*, (London, 1849), pp.404-5. Italics original.

²⁶⁷ E.M. Thompson, *An introduction to Greek and Latin palaeography*, (Oxford, 1912), p.42.

²⁶⁸ Compare, for example, the usage 'white wine', which is a wine that is not left to settle on its lees, and so picks up no colour therefrom.

²⁶⁹ Of course, initially, the type of parchment was named after its colour attribute, though subsequently the type did not change even when the colour attribute did. Thus 'white parchment' will never cease to be 'white parchment' *in type* whatever the colour it may eventually become.

²⁷⁰ For example, as in plates XIII and XIV of his *Восток христианский: Египет и Синай: виды, очерки, планы и надписи к путешествиям А. Порфирия* (St Petersburg, 1857).

vellum that could be procured; while manuscripts of later ages, being usually composed of parchment, are thick, discoloured, and coarsely grained.²⁷¹

Thus when a comment is made that a manuscript is written on 'thin white parchment' (e.g. Uspensky, 1856) it is not a comment on its present colour but of its *type*, and suggestive of age.

Clearly Dr Cooper has greatly misunderstood the meaning of 'white parchment', believing it to be a description of present observed colour, i.e. the attribute of whiteness, rather than unstained parchment distinct from colour-stained varieties. Thus the reader is seriously led astray by his inferences. But in common with many others,²⁷² Dr Cooper has not only mistaken a type for an attribute, *but also* has mistakenly called as witnesses to the leaves in Leipzig (recovered by Tischendorf in 1844) persons who were classifying the yellow-looking leaves then in St Petersburg that were recovered in 1859. From this twin error Dr Cooper infers that the portion of the codex in the British Library has been deliberately distressed and discoloured to give it an appearance of great age since 1844/5. Dr Cooper does not consider whether the leaves in St Petersburg, London and Sinai are yellow simply because that is what 'white parchment' looks like after natural ageing.²⁷³

Dr Cooper argues passionately that the British Library leaves look yellow because they have been artificially distressed, but fails to inform his readers that the Leipzig leaves are similarly coloured. It is no surprise that the leaves in Leipzig and those in

²⁷¹ F. Scrivener, *A Plain Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament* (1861), p.20.

²⁷² For example, David W. Daniels, who displays a photomontage of all the recovered leaves of Codex Sinaiticus on the front cover of his book *Is the 'World's Oldest Bible' a Fake?* to underpin his narrative that parts of Codex Sinaiticus that look yellow like aged parchment have been distressed because they were once described as 'white parchment'. This is also a major thrust of bloggers such as 'Steven Avery' (= Steven Avery Spencer), who make the same fundamental mistake. Fortunately 'Steven Avery' has come to realize that Uspensky saw the 'white parchment' leaves at Mount Sinai in 1850 as well as 1845, so he has had to tailor his account to make the distressing start after 1850. The Codex returned to St Petersburg from Leipzig in 1862 and Uspensky was in St Petersburg from 1861 to 1865. He would surely have noted if any tampering had taken place since his last sight of it in 1850. Uspensky had much to say about Codex Sinaiticus after its first arrival in St Petersburg in 1859, and also wrote about it, but none of it relates to any suggestion of tampering in his lifetime. There were thousands of witnesses to its state in 1859 because it was on public display for two weeks in St Petersburg late that year, and also was exhibited in Warsaw. It was seen by many eminent men of government, including heads of state, as well as scholars who would be familiar with Uspensky's descriptions of the Codex in his two volumes of travels to Sinai and Egypt, published in 1856, and his colour plates of samples of the Codex (produced in 1850), published in 1857. S.P. Tregelles had ample opportunity to comment as he was in Leipzig in 1850 and 1862 and saw the leaves recovered in 1844 and 1859. We nowhere hear of any question about alleged discrepancies in colour. It appears that observers in the mid-nineteenth century fully understood that 'white parchment' was a *type* not a present colour attribute.

²⁷³ As Dr Cooper himself states, after 'a few years only...parchment begins once more to look like, well, parchment', p.79.

the British Museum have slight differences in colour since they have been separated and subject to different environments and conservation techniques since 1844. In particular, the Leipzig leaves were not kept in a controlled temperature and humidity environment until 1998, and suffered significantly from dampness during the 1939-45 war, when they were removed to temporary storage to obviate bomb damage.

Though Dr Cooper has never physically examined them, he confidently assures his readers that 'the Leipzig leaves are uniform and even in their pristine state' (p.87) and 'are so clean and new and undecayed in their appearance' (p.78), whereas the British Library leaves 'have been chemically discoloured' and are 'uniform in their discolouration' (p.87) and bear 'heavy marks of ageing' (p.78). Yet, no less an authority than Dr Ekkehard Henschke, Director of Leipzig University Library 1992-2005, who was a member of the Codex Sinaiticus Project, and intimately familiar with the Leipzig leaves and the British Library leaves, gives a very candid assessment of the true state of the Leipzig leaves in 2006-7:

[T]he varying hot, cold and humid conditions in Leipzig produced a lot of damage...[T]his part of the Codex had suffered badly from humidity...The leaves owned by the British Library are in a better state.²⁷⁴

Modern day conservators would be horrified at treatments that parchments were subjected to in former times, particularly during 1820 – 50, which in some cases have permanently damaged the documents.²⁷⁵ Parchment is particularly susceptible to mould in conditions of high humidity, as well as accelerated gelatinization, but some mild wash regimes are employed. Aqueous washing of parchment presents difficulties, because parchment is damaged if saturated by water and then air dried, and there is always the danger of some solutes in the ink running;²⁷⁶ but a humid atmosphere with dilute anhydrous ammonia gas, or hydrogen peroxide vapour (synthesized 1811) with anhydrous ammonia has long been known as treatment employed by conservators as a fixative for the ink (reducing the acidity, retarding ink corrosion), with mild bleaching properties on the substrate to reduce yellowing and staining, as well as arresting fungal or microbial rot. Hydrogen peroxide with ammonia was still being used in the twentieth century to brighten yellowed and

²⁷⁴ E. Henschke, *Digitizing the Hand-Written Bible: The Codex Sinaiticus, its History and Modern Presentation*, in *Libri* 2007, Vol. 57, pp. 48-9.

²⁷⁵ The aforementioned Cardinal Mai was famous – or infamous – for the use of such chemicals especially on palimpsests, resulting in near destruction of some manuscripts. One rather famous conservation and cleaning attempt in the 1830s by the British Museum on a copy of the Magna Carta rendered it illegible.

²⁷⁶ The black precipitate formed *in situ* as the ink oxidizes has poor solubility, but because the ink when applied is fairly colourless, containing no pigment, some formulations of iron-gall ink have a small amount of dye added so that the ink is visible when applied; and these dye additives can be soluble.

foxed 'white parchment', for example the Juliana Anicia Codex, a 'white parchment' codex produced around AD 512.²⁷⁷ Indeed, some folios in that codex have been selectively brightened using the peroxide-ammonia method.²⁷⁸ Since Dr Cooper is promoting the belief that there are very significant difference in colour between the Leipzig leaves and the British Library leaves (in reality there is not) one would at least expect him to have investigated the possibility of different treatments applied to the leaves as conservation practices rather than rushing to the explanation that the British Library leaves have been deliberately darkened in order to deceive.

Because the flesh sides of parchment manuscripts suffer so badly from ink fading with age, the flesh sides are the most affected by reinforcement, i.e. overwriting the faded letters with fresh ink before they fade to oblivion forever. Of course, such ink may be a slightly different composition, and will not be as old as the original. It is known that iron-gall reinforcing ink may darken when exposed to ammonia gas, but there is a danger that whilst the younger ink will darken, the older, more faded, iron-gall ink will fade further. Dr Cooper can see such an effect on the Leipzig leaves (p.82), but he cannot explain it:

We notice a fading of the letters so severe that an incompetent Victorian 'scribe' – using a metal nib and black 'India' ink – has attempted to 'restore' the text by overwriting it. The overwriting is ugly to say the least, and we can only wonder who, believing the Leipzig leaves to be genuinely ancient, would even think of defacing them that way.

We consider that scholars would be delighted to learn Dr Cooper's technique of determining the composition of inks without physical inspection of a manuscript itself, but merely from photographs; and especially how he can tell how a photograph can indicate that India ink was used, that it was applied with a metal nib, and that by a Victorian. This codex was written with iron-gall inks, which have little colour at the moment of application as they contain neither dyes nor pigments in suspension. Due to exposure to oxygen they slowly precipitate a black pigment *in situ* after penetrating the substrate, which pigment is not water soluble and is very difficult to remove.²⁷⁹ Any reinforcing would surely have been in iron-gall ink, but Dr Cooper considers that India ink serves his thesis so that he can claim (p.90) that the writing was likely done in the nineteenth century:

²⁷⁷ O. Waechter: *The restoration of the 'Vienna Dioscorides'*, in *Studies in conservation*, Volume 7, Number 1, (1962), pp.22-26.

²⁷⁸ Folios 148 verso and 278 recto, for example, exhibit *on the same leaf* a spectrum from blue-white to yellow-brown.

²⁷⁹ Hence specialist iron-gall inks are still used for archival documents, being much more stable than modern dye inks.

The letters are clearly scratched onto the parchment with a metal nib and black 'India' ink, neither of which were in use in the 3rd or 4th centuries, but which were in wide use during the 19th.

Dr Cooper is an unreliable guide on ink technology and the archaeology of ink, for India ink (which has pigment in suspension) was in use long before iron-gall ink: India ink has been used for over 4,000 years and was common in the ancient world, the black variety using carbon black, and the red using cinnabar.²⁸⁰

Tregelles gave public testimony of the condition of Codex Sinaiticus as he had seen it in 1862, compared with his first-hand viewing of the aforementioned Juliana Anicia Codex (i.e. the Vienna Dioscorides) produced in AD 512, and concluded that the Juliana Anicia Codex was in overall better shape:

[W]hen it comes to be contrasted with such a manuscript as the illustrated Dioscorides at Vienna (whose age is fixed by internal evidence at about A.D. 500), that interesting and valuable manuscript looks comparatively quite fresh and modern.²⁸¹

The Juliana Anicia Codex evidences that it *is* possible for the finest parchment and ink to remain in good condition from antiquity.²⁸²

There exists a slight difference in yellow colour between the Leipzig leaves and many of the other leaves recovered. But from that observation one cannot infer that the Leipzig leaves represent the condition of all the leaves in 1844, such that all the others have since been given a fake tan. The hypothesis that some of the leaves were brightened is never considered by Dr Cooper, nor the hypothesis that differences in colour can be accounted by the fact that the leaves have been exposed to very different environment in different locations for over 170 years. A natural material such as parchment that had lain for centuries in the hot dry Sinai desert was not likely to respond well to being transferred to steamy Cairo in the height of summer

²⁸⁰ The Dead Sea scrolls were written using both iron-gall type inks and 'India' type inks.

²⁸¹ Reported in F.H. Scrivener, *A full Collation of the Codex Sinaiticus with the Received Text of the New Testament* (1864), p. xxxi. Tregelles viewed the Codex Sinaiticus in Leipzig in late June 1862 while Tischendorf was preparing the facsimile, and then travelled to Vienna and examined the Julia Anicia Codex the following month. Handling both codices in the summer of 1862, i.e. almost simultaneously, makes Tregelles' testimony and comparison particularly weighty.

²⁸² In 1914, when the codex was still in Russia, scientist Nikolai Alexandrovich Morozov examined it and noted that 'The sheets are very thin, made of elaborate vellum and, what is the most peculiar, are very flexible, and not at all fragile. And this circumstance is rather important for dating the manuscript.' In Morozov's opinion, the parchment could not be older than 600 years; however, though Morozov was a polymath, he was *not* a specialist on parchment. From a purely mechanical point of view, the parchment is so exceptionally thin (typically 0.16mm thick) that its very fineness imparts flexibility even when its bulk stiffness (flexural modulus) increases with age.

of 1859, and thence to a freezing St Petersburg in Russian winter, nor to dank conditions in old fortifications during wartime. Uspensky himself complained about the treatment that the codex was receiving in St Petersburg in December 1859, that

[It had] been exposed to the sight of the whole people of the capital in the space of two weeks and the people looked affectionately on the relic of Sinaitic antiquity, and kissed it devoutly....²⁸³

But, as mentioned previously, the fragments that Uspensky recovered in 1845 are extant. Moreover, what Uspensky saw of the Codex in 1845 he saw again in 1850 and on that latter occasion he produced artwork from which he had excellent colour plates made in the 1850s (Old and New Testament), prints of which are extant in libraries around the world, displaying similar colour to the leaves currently in the British Library. Thus we know the colour of the leaves that Uspensky saw in 1845, and we know that those leaves have not changed in colour appreciably since.

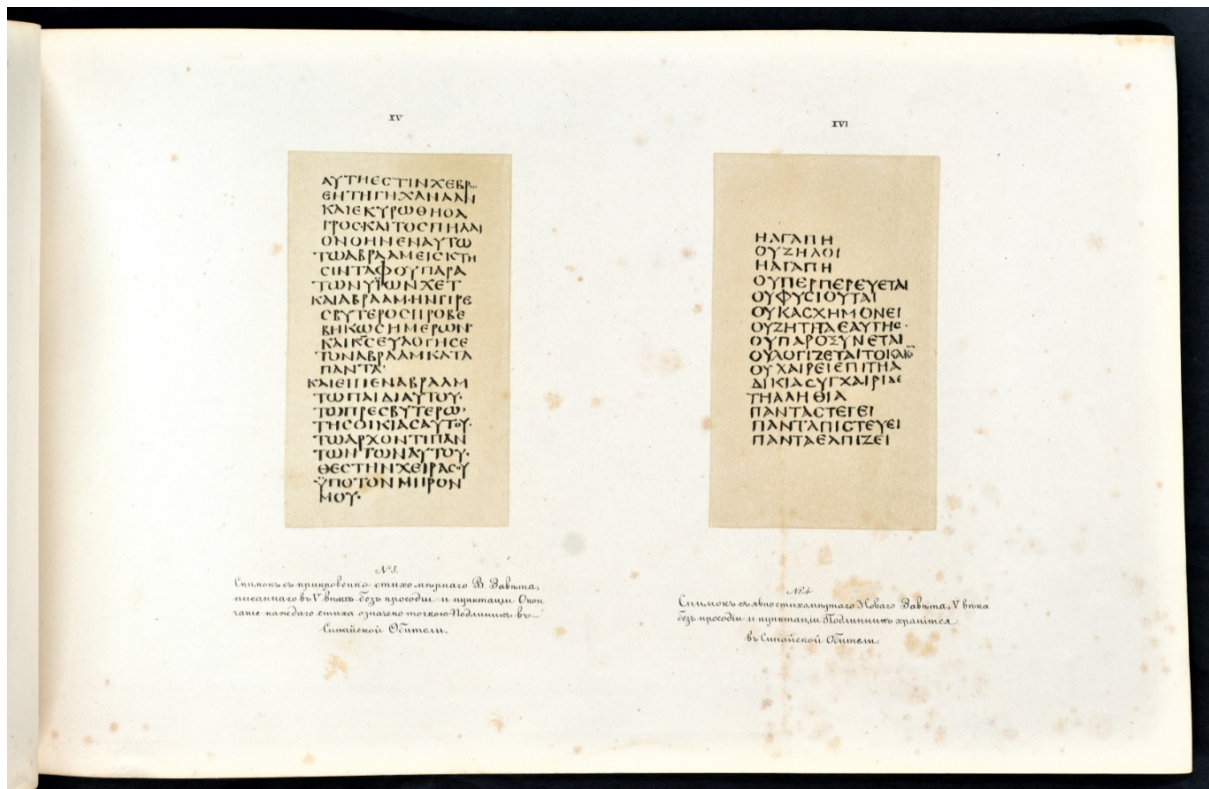


Figure 15 Colour plates from Codex Sinaiticus (Gen. 24 and 1 Cor. 13) produced by Porphyrius Uspensky in 1850, published in 1857, described by him in 1845 as 'white parchment'.

Another way of confirming this is by comparing fragments taken at different times from the same leaf. The last leaf in the British Library collection is half of leaf Q93-f.7

²⁸³ Uspensky, *Мнение о Синайской рукописи, содержащей в себе Ветхий Завет неполный и весь Новый Завет с посланием Св. Апостола Варнавы и книгу Ермы*, (St Petersburg, 1862).

(two columns) from The Shepherd of Hermas. One part of this leaf Q93-f.7 was taken by Uspensky in 1845, and another part was taken by Tischendorf in 1859. The two parts ended up in the Imperial Library in St Petersburg, Tischendorf's fragment in 1869 (now in the British Library) and Uspensky's fragment in 1883 (still in St Petersburg). They match reasonably in colour and are the usual yellowed condition of ancient 'white parchment'. Thus the leaves in the British Library could not have been 'distressed' between 1845 and 1859.

The same argument applies to the page containing Genesis 24, Q3-f.4. Uspensky took his large fragment in 1845, and Tischendorf took his smaller fragment from the same leaf in 1853. Both are in St Petersburg. The parchment and ink colours match reasonably between these fragments, and are essentially the same colours as the leaves in the British Library, and essentially the same colour as the whole leaves discovered at St Catherine's in 1975.

Leaving aside the Leipzig leaves, we have observations of the Codex (and fragments thereof) in 1845, 1850, and 1861 by Uspensky, and we have extant parts of the Codex taken by Uspensky in 1845 and 1861, and by Tischendorf in 1853 and 1859.

Additionally, we have colour plates of Genesis 24 and 1 Corinthians 13 based on Uspensky's 1845 and 1850 observations (printed 1857), and a colour plate of the Numbers fragment brought by Uspensky to Russia in 1861 and printed in England in 1866. These are all yellowish, and some are a very close match in colour to the leaves in Leipzig. Finally we have the leaves recovered in 1975, which had lain in dreadful conditions since the 1830s, and are slightly browner due to accelerated ageing, and the fragment discovered by Sarris in 2009 that had been bound into a book in 1727.²⁸⁴ It is quite impossible to fit a process of deliberate discoloration into the timescale from 1845 onwards. The evidence leads directly to the conclusion that the leaves and ink of the Codex are *authentic colours* for old writing on old parchment.

²⁸⁴ N. Sarris *Classification of Finishing Tools in Greek Bookbinding* (2010), p.215. We cannot, however, draw much from the colour of this fragment as it has been saturated with paste, as shown in the image.



Figure 16 Part of leaf containing Joshua 1 of Codex Sinaiticus bound into volume S.2289 in 1727.

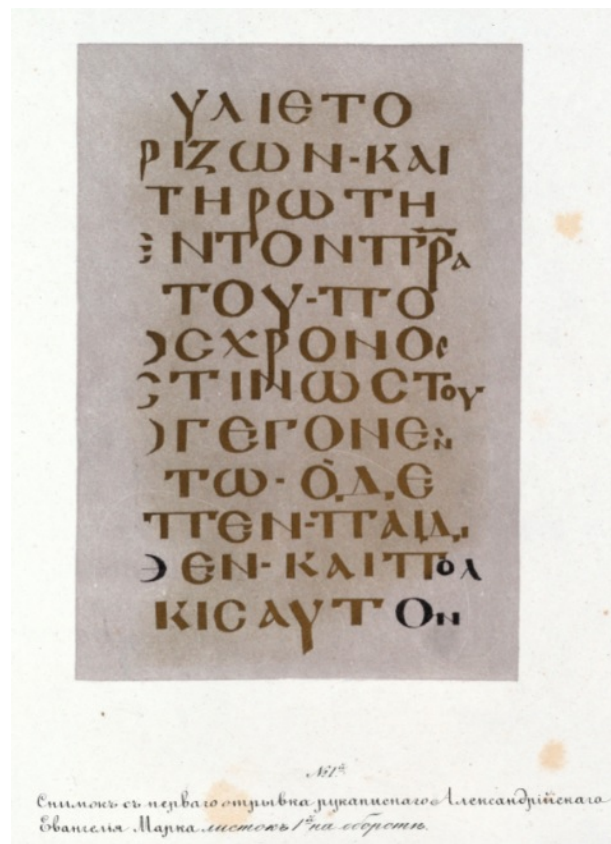


Figure 17 Example by Uspensky of lettering in a codex described by him as of 'purple parchment'.

Conclusion

Clearly, because of its many and gross defects, of which the above examples are but a small sample, we cannot recommend Dr Cooper's monograph as far as his overall thesis is concerned. Regrettably, Dr Cooper's method of proceeding does not come close to the methods of historical analysis, investigative journalism, or sound apologetics. Moreover, as we have amply demonstrated, Dr Cooper's thesis does not meet the test of credibility. Many of his 'facts' are unverified assertions, or plain wrong; he is manifestly not an expert in many of the fields he engages with; he does not consult experts to check his 'facts'; his rhetoric demonstrates that he neither keeps his biases in check, nor constructs logical lines of argument; and he does not satisfactorily address lines of argument and evidence that conflict with, and arguably falsify, his thesis, but rather turns contrary evidence to reinforce it. Sadly, it is not unreasonable to conclude that this is the method of 'conspiracy theory', and we present ample evidence that supports that conclusion.

Evidence that there is a seriously defective methodology that is destined to reach unsound conclusions appears a mere quarter way through Dr Cooper's book under the heading 'A Question of Conspiracy' (p.35), where he asks the reader a series of questions, all based on the premise that his proposed conspiracy is true. This is a classic example of begging the question. For example, Dr Cooper asks

[W]hy did Constantius send Simonides' work to Sinai when it was supposed to be bound for the Tsar of Russia?...For what purpose did he send it to Sinai? Who altered it and aged it at Sinai? Why was Dionysius, Sinai's calligrapher, so reluctant to take charge of the work when asked to do so? Why did the librarian at Sinai and his assistant feign ignorance of how the codex arrived at the monastery?

The hidden premises behind these questions include the following: Simonides wrote the codex; Simonides' account about the codex is true; the codex was altered and aged; Simonides made enquiries at St Catherine's monastery.²⁸⁵ This really amounts to taking as an overarching hidden premise that we accept everything that Simonides says as factually true. That is why Dr Cooper can so easily draw the conclusion (p.35) that 'it is clear that Simonides played a major part in supplying the manuscript that the forgers were able to work on', since that was already woven into the hidden premises.

In any investigation based on evidence one cannot construct premises that incorporate the very thing to be proved. When a desired conclusion is incorporated

²⁸⁵ There is a factual error even in these questions: Dionysius was calligrapher at the Panteleimon monastery at Mount Athos, not at St Catherine's monastery in Sinai: Dr Cooper has mixed up his monasteries. Dr Cooper mixes up others also, for example Constantius, whom he thinks was a 'monastic elder' who commissioned Simonides (p.29).

into the premises, then the conclusion is predetermined and cannot fail to be proved. It is fallacious, it is begging the question, and it is circular reasoning. This is a hallmark of the conspiracy theorist.

Another hallmark is to believe the incredible and the easily disprovable. Dr Cooper's credulity even extends to Simonides' notorious claim that he discovered 'a 1st-century fragment of Matthew's Gospel' (p.41) among the Mayer papyri, the papyrus claiming on its face in a colophon to have been written down by Nicholas the deacon at the dictation of Matthew fifteen years after the ascension. There are fragments from John's gospel, also with a lengthy colophon, and fragments of the epistles of Jude and James, all, says Simonides, genuine and from the days of the apostles. These have been shown to be outright forgeries. But if we are to believe Dr Cooper (p.41) that 'the documents he was accused of forging were actually genuine' then we need only take a trip to Liverpool to see what he describes as that truly 'invaluable collection of documents', the original autographs of the New Testament.²⁸⁶

It is well known that Simonides slipped in forgeries when attention was distracted elsewhere, including by hanging around archaeological digs waiting for the workmen to take a break, in order to plant his 'evidence', and thus associate a forgery with genuine archaeological artefacts.²⁸⁷ Dr Cooper states, in defence of Simonides, that Simonides 'had never been within a mile' of the Mayer papyri 'prior to Mayer's invitation'. That is entirely beside the point: it was what Simonides did once he gained unfettered and unsupervised access to the collection *after* his invitation that is relevant. Simonides was granted many weeks of unsupervised access to the Meyer collection, and took the papyri home! Dr Cooper states (p.41) that the 'papyrus of Matthew's Gospel was unrolled for the first time before witnesses'. Again, that is entirely beside the point: Simonides claimed that he found these apostolic fragments tucked *inside* the manuscripts from Egypt that Henry

²⁸⁶ In his work *The Periplus of Hannon* (London, 1864), p.57, to which Dr Cooper refers, Simonides repeats the claim (originally made in the *Brighton Observer* of July 26, 1861) that the papyrus is 'the oldest scriptural manuscript in the world, being nothing less than the *original* Gospel of St. Matthew, as written by Nicholas, the seventh deacon, at the dictation of the Apostle, in the fifteenth year of the Christian era...[T]his *original* MS. was copied seven times during the life of the Apostle...The *original* remained with Nicholas of Antioch...and this identical manuscript...is identified as being the *original* copy of the Gospel...it furnishes a *purser text* than any known version of the Gospel, *supplies several lost verses*, and clears up *many obscure and disputed passages*' (italics added). The materials are in the National Museums of Liverpool and prominently marked as forgeries produced in 1860 by Simonides the 'forger of ancient texts'. This, then, is not the *Textus Receptus*, so asserting, as Dr Cooper does, that these forged documents are genuinely apostolic is a direct attack on the *Textus Receptus* and the doctrine of Providential Preservation. If Simonides can produce a Gospel with a different and supposedly purer textual basis, then so can Tischendorf.

²⁸⁷ We read of exactly the same unscrupulous behaviour in the Crusades, e.g. finding the tip of the lance that is supposed to have pierced Jesus, and other supposedly auspicious holy relics.

Stobart had brought to England for Mayer,²⁸⁸ but Simonides did not unroll *those* in the presence of witnesses.

The Royal Society of Literature made a detailed study of the Greek fragments that Simonides 'found' in the Mayer papyri and issued a report in 1863 declaring them rank forgeries. This brought to an end the friendship between Simonides and John Eliot Hodgkin, whom Dr Cooper continually mentions as one of Simonides' chief defenders in the 'Simonides Affair' over Codex Sinaiticus. Dr Cooper neglects to inform his readers that by 1864, when Simonides had been completely unmasked, Hodgkin declared that Simonides 'has behaved so extremely badly, that I cannot take any further interest in his affairs.'²⁸⁹

In spite of Simonides' solid reputation as the nineteenth century's greatest forger, with copious works sold by him being detected as forgeries in many countries during the 1840s, 50s and 60s (and since), Dr Cooper nevertheless asserts that all experts everywhere are misrepresenting the facts. Though he gives not a scintilla of evidence in support, it is, he says, a 'fact that the documents he was accused of forging were actually genuine' (p.41). This, of course, is just the standard claim of conspiracy theory: it is 'a fact' that all experts everywhere know that the documents are genuine, but they are all to a man conspiring to declare them forgeries. Dr Cooper is thus expecting his readers to consider *himself* the expert authority, overturning the conclusions of all other qualified experts in all times and places who examined the materials. We are perfectly entitled to ask how qualified Dr Cooper is to judge, and whether Dr Cooper has physically examined the scores of documents hawked by Simonides that are deemed forgeries by these experts – or even *a single one*.

Dr Cooper is prepared to set aside all the well-attested evidence of Simonides' life of deception. However, Simonides' diabolical deception in inventing and disseminating lies about the godly minister of the gospel Jonas King, and Simonides' involvement in genuine conspiracies against the Church *cannot* be set aside since they are not matters of opinion or of scholarly judgment but absolute certainties. Simonides freely chose to throw in his lot with the enemies of the gospel and become a vicious agent to attack the church of Christ with devilish lies. His wicked deceptions were known to Presbyterian and Congregational churches and missionary organizations in the USA and United Kingdom from 1846, and to the executive and legislature of the United States in the early 1850s, and Simonides was still boasting about his persecutions and murderous intents during his time in England from the late 1850s. His claims to have discovered the original autographs

²⁸⁸ Stobart strenuously denied that what Simonides claimed to have found inserted in the scrolls were present when he delivered them to Meyer.

²⁸⁹ Hodgkin to the chemist Henry Deane, April 1864.

of the New Testament (which were outright forgeries by him), and his claim to have written Codex Sinaiticus, which drew attention away from its heterodox origins, and eventually furthered its acceptance, fit into a course of conduct in attacking the Church. As J.K. Elliott remarks (himself a textual scholar), 'Ironically, had it not been for Simonides...many scholars, especially in England, may not have been so interested in...Sinaiticus or taken much notice of the manuscript.'

Dr Cooper suggests that the reason why critics gave Simonides such a hard time over his claim that he wrote Codex Sinaiticus was that they were involved in a conspiracy against the Bible, and thus conspired to call him a forger to discredit him. What this ignores is that Simonides had been continually exposed as a forger and a liar for fourteen years before he started spreading his narrative in the 1860s about writing the Codex. Notices had gone out in the 1840 and 1850s to universities, museums and libraries all over Europe warning them to beware of Simonides. During those years the vast majority of documents rejected as forgeries were non-religious classical works, and thus his long-time reputation as a forger was, until 1860, unrelated to biblical material.

Codex Sinaiticus is not a nineteenth century forgery, and to assert that it is, or that Codex Vaticanus was tampered with in the nineteenth century, flies in the face of facts that can be established. However, the alternative of a fourth century production of Codex Sinaiticus does not follow from rejection of Dr Cooper's thesis. Important scholars have considered that it is a production of the fifth or sixth century of a fourth century exemplar. But whether it is a sixth century copy of a fourth century edition or an edition made in the fourth century, there is an important fourth century component, in a time when the Church was fighting for its life during the Arian controversies, from which there is ample testimony of the corruption of the Scriptures by the Arians. To attribute the existence of Codex Sinaiticus or Vaticanus to much later popish plots blunts the argument that needs to be made against them, because it misdirects the fire. John Burgon's incisive argument, for example, proceeded from the premise that these codices were genuinely ancient, but that the readings of the 'great uncials' could not be the text that was received by the Church catholic (i.e. a *textus receptus*). There was one Catholic Church, but many heretics working in different places, who could not co-ordinate their corruptions. Many of the autographs were still in existence in the second century (as Irenaeus and Tertullian attest), and the Catholic Church could check their copies against those, whereas the various Gnostic cults in their day could not. Accordingly, the ancient copies that have been tampered with differed wildly among themselves and continued to degenerate. Uspensky, who as we have seen re-discovered the Sinaitic New Testament in 1845, affirmed that Sinaiticus was a copy of a fourth century text.

He did not doubt that the work was genuinely ancient, and thus valuable as a historical artefact, yet he saw that it was suffused with Arianism.²⁹⁰

There are indeed many anomalies and unanswered questions concerning the dating and provenance of Codex Sinaiticus, and museums would do the public a great service if they would address themselves to them. But quite apart from its dating and provenance, or any conspiracy attending it, the Codex stands or falls on its own merits or demerits, and in that regard it must be judged a hopeless witness to the text of the New Testament. No man has ever done as much collation of New Testament sources as John Burgon, Dean of Chichester, (including in the quotations of the Church Fathers, his monumental work on which is in the British Library, but has never been printed), and his concise assessment in *The Revision Revised* (1883) still stands unassailable:

We venture to assure [the reader], without a particle of hesitation, that Ɑ [Codex Sinaiticus] B [Codex Vaticanus] D [Codex Bezae] are *three of the most scandalously corrupt copies extant*:—exhibit *the most shamefully mutilated* texts which anywhere are to be met with:—have become, by whatever process (for their history is wholly unknown), the depositories of the largest amount of *fabricated readings*, ancient *blunders*, and *intentional perversions of Truth*,—which are discoverable in any known copies of the Word of GOD.

²⁹⁰ Uspensky wrote, 'I see that the original from which this manuscript was copied was distorted by the Arians, who systematically changed all the places in which St. John the Theologian reveals to us the consubstantial Father and Son.' Uspensky gives as examples John 1:18; 3:16; 5:25-26; 6:45-46; 16:15; and 17:9-10. (Letter to Tischendorf from St Petersburg, February 23, 1864).

Sadly, this Arian bias has found its way directly into many modern Bible translations because of reliance upon Codex Sinaiticus. One of the most egregious recent examples is the English Standard Version (ESV), which is a revision of the Revised Standard Version. Whilst the ESV has tempered some of the RSV's twentieth century liberal bias, it has not addressed the fourth century Arian bias. Indeed, due to the heavy influence of the sub-orthodox trinitarianism of Wayne Grudem on the translation oversight committee (who maintains that the Son is subordinated to the Father not only in his *office* of Mediator *ad extra*, but in the Godhead *ad intra*, which cannot be other than ontologically, a position known as Eternal Subordination of the Son, or 'ESS'), the ESV has given even fuller expression than the RSV ever did to heterodox characteristics in some of its principal underlying texts, and in places reflected a more Arianized reading than the current Jehovah's Witnesses' New World Translation. Indeed, the Jehovah's Witnesses adopted some of these more Arianized ESV readings verbatim when they revised their New World Translation in 2013, for example John 1:18 'at the Father's side', which is unquestionably subordinationist since this verse is speaking of the ontology of the Son. If one remains in any doubt about this matter then the case is demonstrated by examination of the ESV Study Bible, for which Dr Grudem was General Editor, where the heterodox ESS interpretation and commentary on the text is writ large and most conspicuously. It is beyond the scope of this present review article, however, to elucidate this matter further.